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THE

LAMENTABLE and TRUE

TRAGEDIE

OF

M. A R D E N,

OF

FEVERSHAM, in KENT.

WHO WAS

Most wickedlye murdered, by the Means of his disloyall
and wanton Wyfe, who for the Loue she bare to one
Mosbie, hyred two desperat Ruffins, Blackwill and
Shagbag, to kill him.

WHEREIN IS SHEWED,

The great Malice and Discimulation of a wicked Woman, the
vnfatiabie desire of filthie lust, and the shamefull End of all
Murderers.

*With a Preface ; in which some Reasons are offered, in favour
of its being the earliest dramatic Work of Shakespear now
remaining ; and a genuine Account given of the Murder from
authentic Papers of the Time.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for Edward White, dwelling at the lyttle North Dore of
Paule's Church, at the Sign of the Gun. 1592.

And Re-printed verbatim by J. & J. MARCH,

For STEPHEN DOORNE, Bookseller at FEVERSHAM :

And sold by Mess. HAWES & Co. N^o 32. Pater-noster-row, London ;
and by all the Bookfellers in KENT.

M,DCC,LXX.

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of Parliament.**



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July 2



TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

L A D Y S O N D E S.

THE revival of the Works of our early Dramatic Writers, having been lately well received, the Editor was induced to add this MITE to the Collection: His Design meeting with Your LADYSHIP's Approbation, he begs Leave to return his most grateful Acknowledgements for the same, thus publickly, as it proves from Your LADYSHIP's judicious Taste, that it cannot be unworthy of the Preservation intended,

By Your LADYSHIP's,

most obliged, and

obedient humble Servant,

FEVERSHAM,
July 26th, 1770.

EDWARD JACOB.



TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

LADY SONDES.

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Dramatic Writers, having been lately well
received, the Editor was induced to add this
More to the Collection: His Design meeting
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EVERSHAM
July 20th 1700.

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Letter,

P R E F A C E.

MR. Rowe, in the Preface to his Edition of *Shakeſpear's* Plays, ſays “it would be without Doubt a Pleaſure to any Man curious in Things of this Kind, to ſee and know what was the firſt Eſſay of a Fancy like his.” It is therefore ſubmitted to the diſcerning Critics to determine, whether this anonymous Tragedy of *Arden* is not the Thing ſo long wiſhed for. The Reaſons of this ſeeming extraordinary Propoſition ariſe from the Similarity of this, with the later, and known Compoſitions of *Shakeſpear*, and the Time when it was printed, viz. in Quarto A. D. 1592. Why it never was printed with his other Plays, may be preſumed to have happened, from its not having been acted in that Houſe, from whence his Plays were collected and publiſhed by his Brother-performers, ſo many Years afterwards. The oldeſt Date to any of his Plays being 1597, five Years after this Play was printed, and the Author then thirty-three Years old: Conſequently this bids fair (if the Propoſition be admitted) for being his earlieſt theatrical Production now remaining. — Indeed the very Name of *Arden*, from which Family he deſcended by the Female Line, might probably ſtimulate him to try his early Powers, on the Subject of this ſhocking Murder, ſo largely deſcribed by *Hollingshed*.

It is worthy of Obſervation, that *Ben. Johnson's* Play, *The Caſe Altered*, though printed ſo late as 1609, (and a Collection of whoſe Plays was printed in his Life-time, which was not the Caſe with thoſe of *Shakeſpear*) was not known to be in Print, till it was diſcovered to Mr. *Walley*, the Editor of a late Edition of *Johnson's* Works, by our moſt excellent *Rofcius* Mr. *Garrick*, who ſupplied him with the ſame from his own moſt curious Collection of old Plays: The ſame Fate may poſſibly have attended this Tragedy of *Arden*, the Original from which this is printed, *verbatim*, perhaps may be only in the Hands of the Editor; ſo far is certain, no notice is taken of this Edition by *Ames* in his *History of Printing*; or by any Perſon that has publiſhed Accounts of our old dramatic Authors, neither is it to be found in the abovementioned curious Collection. — No Wonder is it then, that it ſhould ſo long eſcape the critical Obſervations of the profeſſed Admirers of the unparalleled *Shakeſpear*, to whoſe Judgment, it is now moſt willingly ſubmitted either to be approved as his, or to be rejected. — It may not be improper to obſerve farther, that there is another, but very incorrect Edition of this Play, in the Roman Letter, and that, even this, is ſo ſcarce as not to be met with, where

where it was most likely it should be, that is at * *Faversham*; some of whose Inhabitants have till of late, at a few Years interval, doubly murdered it, by the excessive bad Manuscript Copies they used, and their more injudicious acting; to the no small Discredit of this valuable Tragedy, whoever was the Author of it: Doubly valuable indeed, on account of its intrinsic Worth, and its Rarity. The Editor, therefore, whose sole View is to secure it from total Oblivion, and to oblige the Curious, makes no doubt of their favouring this Republication.

It may not be amiss to inform them, that a Play lately written by Mr. *Lillo*, with the Title of *Arden of Faversham*, contains many Sentiments, Expressions, and even whole Speeches taken from this very Performance.

As an Account of Mr. *Arden* (for that was his true Name) and of his Murder, taken from authentic Papers of the Time, may not prove wholly unacceptable, the Editor adds the following short Memorials:

Mr. *Thomas Arden* was chief Comptroller of his Majesty's Customs at *Faversham*, and was once elected Mayor of it; he seems to have been a Gentleman of Consequence, by being employed to procure a new Charter for the said Town upon the dissolution of the Abby there.---By his Marriage with the Daughter-in-law of Sir *Edward North*, and his Connections with Sir *Thomas Cheney*, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, he procured Grants from the Crown of a considerable Part of the Estate of the late dissolved Abby.---He appears to be well disposed, by his charitable Donation of some Houses and Land, to the value of about forty Shillings a Year, to the Corporation, for the Benefit of the Poor, and for an annual Sermon, to be preached in Commemoration of the Benefactors to the Town, in which his Charity was to be recited, and as his Words were, " *In order to provoke other good Men to do the like.*"

This Legacy, however, was contested many Years after, by the second Husband of Mr. *Arden's* only Daughter and Heir; what the Issue was may be conjectured from the Town's not possessing any of the Estate so bequeathed; notwithstanding which, Respect is still had to his Memory by continuing annually his commemoration Sermon on Midlent Sunday, and by a Distribution of Bread to the Poor out of the Revenue of the Town, on that Day, agreeable to his Will.

Anno Dom. 1550. Reg. Re. Ed. 6ti quarto.

This Yere the 15 Day of February, being Sondag, one *Thomas Arden*, Gent. was heinously murdered in his own Parlour

* The proper Name of the Place, though commonly written as in the Title Page where it is continued, in conformity to the old Edition.

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about seven o'Clock in the Night, by one *Thomas Morsby*, a Taylor of *London*, late Servant to Sir *Edward North*, Knight, Chancellor of the Augmentations, Father-in-law unto *Alice Ardern*, Wife of the said *Thomas Ardern*, and by one *Black Will* of *Calyce*, a Murderer, who was previously sent for from thence, by the appoyntment of the said *Alice Ardern*, and *Thomas Morsby*, one *John Greene*, and *George Bradshaw*, Inhabitants of the said Town, to the intent to murder her said Husband. Which *Alice* the said *Morsby* did not only keep in her own House, but also fed him with delicate meats and sumptuous apparel: All which Things the said *Thomas Ardern* did well know, and willfully permit, by reason whereof she procured her said Husband's death, in order to have marryed the said *Morsby*, and so she made of her Council, the said *Morsby* and one *Cicely Ponders* his Sister, her two Servants *Michael Saunderson* and *Elizabeth Strafford*, and the Abettors to the said Murder were the aforesaid *Greene* and *Bradshaw*, and one *William Blackborne* a Painter. — Which *Bradshaw* fetcht the said *Black Will*, and a Coadjutor named *Loosebagg*, so that he was most shamefully murdered as he was playing at Tables, friendly with the said *Morsby*; being at his Death the said *Alice*, *Morsby*, *Michael*, and *Elizabeth*, and the said *Black Will*, having helped to carry his Body into a dark House adjoining, he went to *Cicely Ponders*'s House, and received eight Pounds for his Reward, and departed, and then the said *Cicely Ponders* went to assist in carrying out the dead Corpse, into a Meadow on the Backside of the said *Ardern*'s Garden, and about eleven o'Clock he was found where they laid Him, whereupon his House was searched and his Blood found, so that it was manifest that he was slain in his own House. Whereupon the said *Alice*, *Michael*, *Susan*, *Morsby*, *Ponders*, and *Bradshaw* were attached of Felony, and shortly after tried by a special Commission under the Great Seal of *England*, within the Liberties of the said Town, in the Abby-Hall, which the said *Thomas Ardern* had purchased, and there convicted and condemned to die; but the aforesaid *Greene*, *Blackborne*, and *Loosebagg* escaped at that Time. Shortly after by commandment of the King's most Honorable Council, the said *Alice Ardern* was burnt at *Canterbury*, and *Bradshaw* hung in Chains there, *Thomas Morsby* and his Sister *Cicely Ponders*, were hanged in *Smithfield*, in *London*, *Michael Saunderson* was drawn and hanged in Chains, and *Elizabeth Strafford* burnt, within the liberties of this Town. And about the end of *July* next following, the said *Greene* was taken and brought hither, where shortly after he was judged to be hanged in Chains within the said Liberties.

All the Chattels of the said Murderers forfeited to the Town, clear of all Expences of the Prosecution, &c. amounted to one hundred and twenty Pounds, after the old Rate, whereof was lost, by the abasing or fall of the said Money sixty Pounds.

It is to be hoped the following parallel Places of this Play and *Shakespear's* known Productions, to which many more might be added, will serve to justify the Editor's Opinion, that it was written by that Author, he by no means thinks himself qualified to determine magisterially, and only seems confident, that it will be found superior to any of an earlier Date in our Language; and wishes, if his Proposition be not admitted, that its real Author could be pointed out by more convincing Arguments.

ARDEN, Page 6. *He send from London such a taunting letter.*
As you like it, Act III. Sc. 11. *I will write to him such a taunting letter.*

Page 6. *With a verse or two stolen from a painted cloth.*
As you like it, A. III. S. 7. *But I answer you right in the stile of the painted cloth.*

Page 8. *So lists the sailor to the Mermaid's song.*
Com. of Errors, A. III. S. 4. *I'll stop my ears against the Mermaid's song.*

Page 8. *So looks the traveller to the Basiliske.*
Winter's Tale. *Make me not sighted like the Basiliske.*

Page 25. *A lean faced writhin knave, &c.*
Com. of Errors. A. V. S. 5. *A hungry, lean faced villain, &c.*

Page 40. *The white livered peasant.*
Mer. of Ven. A. III. S. 2. *Liver as white as Milk.*

Page 40. *And he shall buy his merriment as dear.*
Com. of Errors, A. IV. S. 1. *But, Sirrah, you shall buy this sport as dear.*

Page 40. *How now, Will, become a Precisian?*
Mer. Wiv. of Windsor. A. II. S. 1. *Use Reason for his Precisian.*

Page 47. *That shews my heart a Raven for a Dove.*
Midf. N. Dr. A. II. S. 7. *Who will not change a Raven for a Dove.*

Page 55. *Home is a wild cat to a wandering Wit.*
Othel. S. 5. *Wild cats in your kitchens.*

Page 50. *You were best swear me on the in'errogatories.*
Mer. of Ver. last Sc. *And charge us there on interrogatories.*

Page 66. *And yet no horned beast, the horns are thine.*
Othel. A. IV. S. 2. *A horned man's a monster and a beast.*

Page 74. *Fling down Endimion, and snatch him up.*
Mer. of Ven. A. V. S. 1. *Peace, how the moon sleeps with Endimion.*

Page 87. *Let my death make amends for all my sin.*
Much ado, A. IV. S. 2. *Death is the fairest cover for her shame.*

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(Enter ARDEN and FRANCKLIN.)

FRANCKLIN.

ARDEN cheere up thy spirits and droup no more
My gracious Lord the Duke of Sommerfet:

Hath frely given to thee and to thy heyres,

By letters patents from his Majesty :

All the lands of the Abbey of Feversham. (King's,

Heer are the Deedes sealed and subscribed with his Name and the
Read them, and leave this melancholy moode.

ARDEN. Francklin thy loue prolongs my weary lyfe,

And but for thee, how odious were this lyfe :

That shoves me nothing but torments my soule,

And those foule objects that offend myne eies,

Which makes me wish that for this vale of Heaven,

The TRAGEDY of M. ARDEN,

The earth hung ouer my heede and couerd mee.

Loue letters past twixt Mosbie and my wyfe,

And they haue preue meetings in the towne :

Nay on his finger did I spy the Ring,

Which at our Marriage day the Preeft put on,

Can any greefe be half so great as this ?

FRAN. Comfort thyselfe sweete freend, it is not strange,
That women will be false and wauering.

ARD. I, but to doat on such a one as hee
Is monstrous Francklin, and intollerable.

FRAN. Why, what is he ?

ARD. A Botcher and no better at the first,
Who by base brocage, getting some small stock :

Crept into seruice of a noble man :

And by his seruile flattery and fawning,

Is now become the steward of his house,

And bravely iets it in his filken gowne.

FRAN. No nobleman will countnaunce such a pefant,

ARD. Yes, the Lord Clifford, he that loues not mee,
But through his fauour let him not grow proude,

For were he by the Lord Protector backt,

He should not make me to be pointed at,

I am by birth a gentleman of bloode,

And that injurious riball that attempts,

To vyolate my deare wyves chastitie,

(For deare I holde hir loue, as deare as heaven)

Shall on the bed which he thinks to defile,

See his disseuered joints and sinews torne,

Whylst on the planchers, pants his weary body,

Smeard in the channels of his lustfull bloode.

FRAN

FRAN. Be patient gentle freend, and learne of me,
To ease thy grieve, and saue her chastitye :
Intreat her faire, sweet words are fittest engines
To race the flint walls of a womans breast :
In any case be not too jelyouse,
Nor make a question of her loue to thee,
But as securely, presently take Horse,
And ly with me at London all this tearme,
For women when they may, will not,
But beeing kept back, straight grows outragious.

ARD. Though this abhorres from reason, yet ile try it,
And call her forth, and presently take leaue : How Ales,

Here enters ALES.

ALES. Husband what meane you to get up so earely.
Sommer nights are short, and yet you ryse ere day,
Had I beene wake you had not rise so soone.

ARD. Sweet loue thou knowest that we two Ouid like,
Haue often chid the morn, when't gan to peepe,
And often wisht that darke nights purblind steedes,
Would pull her by the purple mantle back :
And cast her in the Ocean to her loue.
But this night sweete Ales thou hast kild my hart,
I heard thee call on Mosbie in thy sleepe.

ALES. Tis lyke I was a sleepe when I nam'd him,
For beeing awake he comes not in my thoughts :

ARD. I but you started vp, and suddenly,
Insteede of him : caught me about the necke.

ALES. In steede of him ! why, who was there but you,
And where but one is, how can I mistake.

FRAN. Arden forbear to vrldge her ouer farre.

4 The TRAGEDY of M. ARDEN,

ARD. Nay loue there is no credit in a dreame,
Let it suffice I know thou louest me well.

ALES. Now I remember where vpon it came,
Had we no talke of Mosbie yesternight.

FRAN. Mistres Ales I hard you name him once or twice,

ALES. And thereof came it, therefore blame not me,

ARDEN. I know it did, and therefore let it passe,
I must to London sweete Ales presently.

ALES. But tell me do you meane to stay there long?

ARD. No longer there, till my affaires be done.

FRAN. He will not stay aboue a month at most.

ALES. A month aye me, sweete Arden come againe
Within a day or two, or els I die.

ARD. I cannot long be from thee gentle Ales,
Whilest, Michel fetch ovr horses from the field,
Francklin and I will down vnto the key:

For I haue certaine goods there to vnload,
Meane while prepare our breakfast gentle Ales,
For yet ere noone wele take horse and away.

(Exeunt Arden, and Franklin.

ALES. Ere noone he meanes to take horse and away:
Sweete newes is this, Oh that some ayrie spirit,
Would, in the shape and liknes of a horse,
Gallope with Arden crosse the Ocean,
And throw him from his backe into the waues,
Sweete Mosbie is the man that hath my hart:
And he vsurpes it, hauing nought but this,
That I am tyed to him by marriage.
Loue is a God and marriage is but words,
And therefore Mosbies title is the best,

Tusse

Tushe whether it be or no, he shall be mine,
In spight of him, of Hymen, and of rytes.

Here enters ADAM of the Flourdeluce.

And here comes Adam of the flourdeluce
I hope he brings me tydings of my loue.
How now Adam, what is the newes with you?
Be not affraid my husband is now from home.

ADAM. He whom ye wot of Mosbie Mistres Ales,
Is come to towne, and sends you word by mee,
In any case you may not visit him.

ALES. Not visit him?

ADAM. No, nor take knowledge of his beeing heere,

ALES. But tell me is he angree or displeased.

ADAM. It should seeme so, for he is wondrous sad.

ALES. Were he as mad as rauing Hercules,
Ile see him, I, and were thy house of Force,
These hands of mine should race it to the ground:
Unless that thou wouldst bring me to my loue.

ADAM. Nay and you be so impatient Ile be gone

ALES. Stay Adam, thou wert wont to be my friend,
Aske Mosbie how I have incurred his wrath,

Beare him from me these paire of siluer dice:

With which we plaid for kisses many a tyme,

And when I lost, I wan, and so did hee:

Such winning, and such losing, Joue send me,

And bid him if his loue doo not decline,

To come this morning but along my dore:

And as a stranger, but salute me there,

This may he doo without suspect or feare.

ADAM. Ile tell him what you say, and so farewell.

Exit. ADAM.

6 The TRAGEDY OF M. ARDEN,

ALES Doo, and one day Ile make amends for all :

I know he loues me well, but dares not come,
Because my husband is so Jelious :
And these my narrow prying neighbours blab,
Hinders our meetings when we would conferre.
But if I live that block shall be remoued,
And Mosbie, thou that comes to me by stelth,
Shall neither feare the biting speach of men,
Nor Arden's lookes, as surely shall he die,
As I abhorre him, and loue onely thee.

How now Michaell, whether are you going ?

MICHAEL. To fetch my master's nagge,
I hope youle thinke on mee.

ALES. I, But Michael see you keepe your oath,
And be as secret, as you are resolute.

MICHAEL. Ile see he shall not liue aboue a weeke.

ALES. On that condition Michael here is my hand,
None shall haue Mosbies sifter but thy selfe.

MICHAEL. I understand the Painter heere hard by,
Hath made reporte that he and Sue is sure.

ALES. There's no such matter Michaell beleeeve it not,

MICHAEL But he hath sent a dagger sticking in a hart,
With a verse or two stollen from a painted cloath :
The which I heere the wench keeps in her chest,
Well let her kepe it, I shall finde a fellow
That can both write and reade, and make rime too,
And if I doo, well, I say no more :
Ile send from London such a taunting letter,
As shall eat the hart he sent with salt,
And sling the dagger at the Painters head.

ALES.

ALES. What needes all this, I say that Sufan's thine.

MICHAELL. Why then I say that I will kill my maffer,
Or any thing that you will haue me doo.

ALES. But Michaell see you do it cunningly.

MICHAELL. Why say I should be tooke, ile never confesse,
That you know any thing, and Sufan being a Maide,
May begge me from the gallows of the Shrieve.

ALES. Truste not to that Michaell.

MICHAELL. You cannot tell me, I haue seene it I,
But mistres tell her whether I liue or die.
Ile make her more woorth then twenty Painters can,
For I will rid myne elder brother alway:
And then the farme of Bocton is mine owne.
Who would not venture vpon house and land
When he may haue it for a right downe blowe?

Here enters MOSBIE.

ALES. Yonder comes Mosbie, Michaell get thee gone,
And let not him nor any knowe thy drifts.

(Exit Michaell.)

Mosbie my loue.

MOSBIE. Away I say, and talke not to me now.

ALES. A word or two sweete hart, and then I will,
Tis yet but early daies, thou needest not feare.

MOSBIE. Where is your husband?

ALES. Tis now high water, and he is at the key.

MOSBIE. There let him be, hence forward know me not.

ALES. Is this the end of all thy solemne oathes?

Is this the frute thy reconcilment buds?

Haue I for this giuen thee so many fauors,

Incurd my husband's hate, and out alas,

Made shipwrack of myne honour for thy sake,
 And doest thou say hence forward know me not?
 Remember when I lockt thee in my closet,
 What were thy words and mine; did we not both
 Decree, to murder Arden in the night.
 The heauens can witnes, and the world can tell,
 Before I saw that falshoode looke of thine,
 Fore I was tangled with thy tyfing speach,
 Arden to me was dearer then my soule.
 And shall be still, base pesant get thee gone.
 And boast not of thy conquest ouer me.
 Gotten by witch-craft, and meere sorcery.
 For what hast thou to countenaunce my loue,
 Beeing discended of a noble house,
 And matcht already with a gentleman,
 Whose seruant thou maist be, and so farewell.

MOS. Ungentle and vnkinde Ales, now I see
 That which I euer feard, and finde too true:
 A womans loue is as the lightning flame,
 Which euen in bursting forth consumes it selfe;
 To try thy constancie haue I beene strange,
 Would I had neuer tryed, but liued in hope.

ALES. What needs thou try me, whom thou neuer found false,

MOS. Yet pardon me for love is Jelious,

ALES. So lifts the Sailer to the Mermaids song,
 So lookes the trauellour to the Basiliske,
 I am content for to be reconcil'de,
 And that I know will be mine overthrow.

MOS. Thine overthrow? first let the world dissolue,

ALES. Nay Mosbie let me still inioye thy loue,

And

And happen what will, I am resolute,
My sauing husband hoordes vp bagges of gould,
To make our children rich, and now is hee
Gone to unload the goods that shall be thine,
And he and Francklin will to London straight.

MOS. To London Ales, if thoult be rulde by mee,
Weele make him sure enough for comming there.

ALES. Ah, would we could.

MOS. I happen'd on a Painter yesternight,
The onely cunning man of Christendoome:
For he can temper poyson with his oyle,
That who so lookes vpon the worke he drawes,
Shall with the beames that issue from his sight,
Suck vennome to his breast and slay him selfe,
Sweete Ales he shall draw thy counterfet,
That Arden may by gaizing on it perish.

Ales. I but Mosbie that is dangerous,
For thou or I, or any other els,
Comming into the Chamber where it hangs, may die.

MOS. I but weele haue it couered with a cloath,
And hung vp in the study for himselfe.

ALES. It may not be, for when the pictur's drawne,
Arden I know will come and shew it me.

MOS. Feare not we will have that shall serue the turne,
This is the painters house Ile call him foorth,

ALES. But Mosbie, Ile haue no such picture I:

MOS. I pray thee leaue it to my discretion. How, Clarke

Here enters Clarke.

O you are an honest Man of your word, you serud me wel,

CLARK. Why sir ile do it for you at any time,

Prouided as you haue giuen your worde,
 I may haue Sufan Mosbie to my wife:
 For as sharpe witted Poets, whose sweete verse
 Make heauenly Gods break off their Nector draughts,
 And lay their eares down to the lowly earth:
 Use humble promise to their sacred Muse,
 So we that are the Poets fauorits,
 Must haue a loue, I, Love is the Painters Muse.
 That makes him frame a speaking countenance.
 A weeping eye that witnesses hartes grief,
 Then tell me Master Mosbie shall I haue hir?

ALES. Tis pittie but he should, heele vse her well.

MOS. Clarke heers my hand my sifter shall be thine,

CLA. Then brother to requite this curtesie,
 You shall command my lyfe my skill and all.

ALES. Ah that thou couldst be secret,

MOS. Feare him not, leaue, I haue talkt sufficient,

CLA. You know not me, that ask such questions:
 Let it suffice, I know you loue him well.
 And faine would haue your husband made away:
 Wherein trust me you shew a noble minde,
 That rather then youle liue with him you hate,
 Youle venture lyfe, and die with him you loue,
 The like will I do for my Sufans sake.

ALES. Yet nothing could inforce me to the deed,
 But Mosbies loue, might I without controll,
 Inioy thee still, then Arden should not die:
 But seeing I cannot, therefore let him die.

MOS. Enough sweete Ales, thy kinde words make me melt,
 Your tricke of poysoned pictures we dislyke,

Some

Some other poyson would do better farre.

ALES. I such as might be put into his broth,
And yet in taste not to be found at all.

CLA. I know your minde, and here I haue it for you,
Put but a dram of this into his drinke,
Or any kinde of broth that he shall eat :
And he shall die within an houre after.

ALES. As I am a gentle-woman Clarke, next day
Thou and Susan shall be married.

MOS. And ile mak her dowry more than ile talk of Clark,

CLA. Yonder's your husband, Mosbie ile be gone.

Here enter Arden and Francklin.

ALES. In good time, see where my husband comes,
Maister Mosbie aske him the question your selfe.

Exit Clarke.

MOS. Maister Arden, being at London yester night,
The Abbey lands whereof you are now posselt,
Were offred me on some occasion,
By Greene one of sir Antony Agers men :
I pray you sir tell me, are not the lands yours ?
Hath any other interest herein ?

ARD. Mosby that question wele decyde anon,
Ales make ready my brekfast, I must hence.

Exit Ales.

As for the lands Mosbie they are mine,
By letters patents from his Majesty :
But I must haue a Mandat for my wyfe,
They say you seeke to robbe me of her loue,
Villaine what makes thou in her company,
She's no companion for so base a groome.

MOSBIE. Arden I thought not on her, I came to thee,
But rather then I pocket vp this wrong.

FRANCKLIN. What will you doo fir ?

MOS. Reuenge on the proudest of you both :

❖ *Then ARDEN drawes forth MOSBIES sword.*

ARDEN. So firha, you may not weare a sword,
The statute makes against artificers,
I warrand that I doo, now vse your bodkin,
Your spanish needle, and your pressing Iron.
For this shall go with me, and marke my words,
You goodman botcher, tis to you I speake,
The next time that I take thee neare my house,
In steede of Legs Ile make thee crall on stumps.

MOS. Ah maister Arden you haue iniurde mee,
I doo appeale to God, and to the world.

FRAN. Why canst thou deny; thou wert a butcher once,

MOS. Measure me what I am, not what I was.

ARD. Why what art thou now, but a Velvet drudge,
A cheating steward, and base minded peasant,

MOS. Arden now thou hast belcht and vomited,
The rancorous venome of thy mis-swolne hart,
Heare me but speake, as I intend to liue
With God, and his elected saints in heauen,
I neuer meant more to solicit her,
And that she knowes, and all the world shall see,
I loued her once, sweete Arden pardon me.
I could not chuse, her beauty fyred my heart,
But time hath quench't these ouer raging coles,
And Arden though I now frequent thy house,
Tis for my sisters sake, her waiting maid

And

And not for hers, maieft thou enjoy her long :
Hell fyre and wrathfull vengeance light on me,
If I dishonor her or injure thee.

ARD. Mosbie with these thy protestations,
The deadly hatred of my hart's appeased,
And thou and Ile be freends, if this proue true.
As for the base tearmes I gaue thee lately.
Forget them Mosbie, I had cause to speake :
When all the Knights and Gentlemen of Kent,
Make common table talke of her and thee.

MOS. Who liues that is not toucht with slanderous Tongues,

FRA. Then Mosbie, to eschew the speache of men,
Upon whose general brute all honor hangs,
Forbeare his house.

ARD. Forbeare it, nay rather frequent it more.
The worlde shall see that I distrust her not,
To warne him on the sudden from my house,
Were to confirme the rumour that is growne.

MOS. By faith my sir you say true,
And therefore will I sojourne here a while,
Untill our enemies haue talkt their fill.
And then I hope theile cease, and at last confesse,
How causeles they haue injurde her and me.

ARD. And I will ly at London all this tearme,
To let them see how light I wey their words.

Here enters ALES.

ALES. Husband sit down, your breakfast will be could,

ARD. Come M. Mosbie will you sit with vs,

MOS. I cannot eat, but ile sit for company.

ARD. Sirra Michaell see our horse be ready.

ALES.

The TRAGEDY of M. ARDEN,

ALES. Husband why pause ye, why eat you not,

ARD. I am not well, thers something in this broth
That is not holsome, didst thou make it Ales?

ALES. I did, and thats the cause it likes not you,

❖ *Then she throwes down the broth on the grounds.*

Thers nothing that I do can please your taste,

You were best to say I would haue poysoned you,

I cannot speak or cast aside my eye :

But he imagines, I have stept awry.

Heres he that you cast in my teeth so oft,

Now will I be convinced, or purge my selfe,

I charge thee speake to this mistrustfull man,

Thou that wouldst see me hange, thou Mosbye thou,

What fauour hast thou had more then a kisse,

At comming or departing from the Towne ?

MOS. You wrong your selfe and me, to cast these douts,
Your louing husband is not jelious.

ARD. Why gentle mistres Ales, can't I be ill,
But youle accuse your selfe.

Franckline thou hast a box of Methridate,

Ile take a lyttle to preuent the worst.

FRAN. Do so, and let vs presently take horse,
My life for yours ye shall do well enough.

ALES. Giue me a spoone, Ile eat of it my selfe,
Would it were full of poyson to the brim.

Then should my cares and troubles have an end,
Was euer silly woman so tormented?

ARDEN. Be patient sweet loue, I mistrust not thee,

ALES.

ALES. God will reuenge it Arden if thou doest.
For neuer woman lou'd her husband better, then I do thee.

ARD. I know it sweete Ales, cease to complaine:
Least that in teares I answer thee againe.

FRAN. Come leaue this dallying, and let vs away.

ALES. Forbeare to wound me with that bitter word,
Arden shall go to London in my armes.

ARD. Loth am I to depart, yet I must go,

ALES. Wilt thou to London then, and leaue me here:

Ah if thou loue me gentle Arden stay,

Yet if thy busines be of great Import,

Go if thou wilt Ile bear it as I may:

But write from London to me euery weeke,

Nay euery day, and stay no longer there

Then thou must nedes, least that I die for sorrow.

ARD. Ile write vnto thee euery other tide,
And so farewell sweete Ales, till we meete next.

ALES. Farewell Husband seeing youle haue it so.

And M. Francklin, seeing you take him hence,

In hope youle hasten him home Ile give you this,

❖ (*And then she kisseth him.*)

FRAN. And if he stay the fault shall not be mine,
Mosbie farewell, and see you keepe your oath,

MOS. I hope he is not Jelious of me now.

ARD. No Mosbie no, hereafter thinke of me,
As of your dearest friend, and so farewell.

Exeunt Arden, Francklin, & Michaell.

ALES. I am glad he is gone, he was about to stay.
But did you marke me then how I brake off?

MOS.

MOS. I, Ales, and it was cunningly performed,
But what a villaine is this painter, Clarke!

ALES. Was it not a goodly poyson that he gaue?
Why he's as well now as he was before.
It should haue bene some fine confection,

That might haue giuen the broth some daintie taste,
This powder was too grosse and populous.

MOS. But had he eaten but three spoonefulles more,
Then had he died, and our loue continued.

ALES. Why so it shall, Mosbie, albeit he liue.

MOS. It is vnpossible, for I have sworne
Never hereafter to solícite thee,
Or, whilest he liues, once more importune thee.

ALES. Thou shalt not neede, I will importune thee.
What! shall an oath make thee forsake my loue?
As if I have not sworne as much my selfe,
And giuen my hand vnto him in the church.
Tush, Mosbie, oaths are wordes, and words are winde,
And winde is mutable: Then I conclude,
'Tis childishnes to stand vpon an oath.

MOS. Well proved, Mistres Ales, yet by your leaue,
I will keepe mine vnbroken whilest he liues.

ALES. I, do, and spare not; his time is but short;
For if thou bee'st as resolute as I,
Wee'le haue him murdered as he walkes the streets.
In London many alehouse Ruffins keepe,
Which, as I heare, will murther men for gould;
They shall be soundly fed to pay him home.

Here enters Greene.

MOS. Ales, what's he that comes yonder, knowest thou him?
ALES.

ALES. Mosbie be gone, I hope 'tis one that comes
To put in practise our intended drifts.

Exit Mosbie.

GRE. Mistris Arden you are well met,
I am sorry that your husband is from home,
When as my purposed iourney was to him :
Yet all my labour is not spent in vaine,
For I suppose that you can full discourse,
And flat resolue me of the thing I seeke.

ALES. What is it, Maister Greene? If that I may,
Or can, with safety, I will answer you.

GRE. I heard your husband hath the grant, of late,
Confirmed by letters patents from the king,
Of all the lands of the Abby of Feversham,
Generally intituled; so that all former grants
Are cut off, whereof I my selfe had one,
But now my interest by that is void.

This is all, Mistris Arden, is it true or no?

ALES. True, Maister Greene, the lands are his in state,
And whatsoever leases were before,
Are void for tearme of Maister Arden's lyfe :
He hath the grant vnder the Chancery seale.

Gre. Pardon me, Mistris Arden, I must speake,
For I am toucht. Your husband doth me wrong,
To wring from me the little land I haue.

My liuing is my lyfe, onely that
Resteth remainder of my portion.

Desyre of welth is endles in his minde,
And he is gredy, gaping still for gaine :
Nor cares he though young gentlemen do begge,
So he may scrape and hoorde vp in his poutche.

D

But

But seeing he hath taken my lands, I'll value lyfe
 As careles, as he is careful for to get :
 And tell him this from me, I'll be reuenged,
 And so, as he shall wish the Abby lands
 Had rested still within their former state.

ALES. Alas ! poor gentleman, I pittie you,
 And wo is me that any man should want.
 God knowes, 'tis not my fault : But wonder not
 Though he be harde to others, when to me;
 Ah, Maister Greene, God knowes how I am vs'de,

GRE. Why, Mistres Arden, can the crabbed churle,
 Use you vnkindely ! Respects he not your birth,
 Your honorable freends, nor what you brought ?
 Why, all Kent knowes your parentage, and what you are.

ALES. Ah ! M. Greene, be it spoken in secret heere,
 I neuer liue good day with him alone :
 When hee is at home, then haue I froward lookes,
 Hard words and blowes, to mend the match withall :
 And though I might content as good a man,
 Yet doth he keepe in euery corner trulles,
 And, weary with his trugges at home,
 Then rides he straight to London ; there, forsooth,
 He revelles it among such filthie ones,
 As counsel him to make away his wyfe.
 Thus live I daily in continual Fear,
 In sorrow ; so despairing of redres,
 As every day I wish, with harty prayer,
 That he or I were taken forth the worlde.

GRE. Now trust me, Mistres Ales, it greeveth me,
 So faire a creature should be so abused.

Who

Why who'd have thought the ciuil fir so follen,
He looks so smoothly : Fye upon him, Churle ;
And if he liues a day he liues too long.
But, frolick woman, I shall be the man
Shall fet you free from all this discontent ;
And if the Churle deny my intereste,
And will not yelde my lease into my hand,
I'll pay him home, whateuer hap to me.

ALES. But speake you as you thinke :

GRE. I, God's my witnes, I meane plaine dealing
For I had rather die than lose my land.

ALES. Then, Maister Greene, be counsailed by me,
Indaunger not your selfe for such a Churle,
But hyre some Cutter for to cut him short ;
And heer's ten pound to wager them with all,
When he is dead you shall have twenty more.
And the lands whereof my husband is possesse,
Shall be intytled as they were before.

GRE. Will you keepe promise with me ?

ALES. Or count me false and periur'de whilst I live.

GBE. Then heer's my hand I'll haue him so dispatcht ;
I'll vp to London straight, I'll thether poast,
And neuer rest till I haue compass it.
'Till then farewell.

ALES. Good fortune follow all your forward thoughts.

Exit Greene.

And whosoeuer doth attempt the deede,
A happie hand I wish, and so farewell.
All this goes well. Mosbie, I long for thee,
To let thee know all that I haue contriued.

Here enter Mosbie and Clarke.

MOS. How now, Ales, what's the newes ?

ALES. Such as will content thee well, sweete hart.

MOS. Well, let them passe a while, and tell me, Ales,
How haue you dealt and tempered with my sifter.

What, will she haue my neighbour Clarke, or no ?

ALES. What, M. Mosbie ! let him wooe himself,
Thinke you that maides looke not for faire wordes ?

Go to her, Clarke, shee's all alone within,
Michaell, my man, is cleane out of her bookes.

CLA. I thanke you, Mistris Arden, I will in,
And if faire Susan and I can agree,
You shall command me to the vttermost,
As farre as either goods or lyfe may streatch.

Exit Clark.

MOS. Now, Ales, let's heare thy newes.

ALES. They be so good, that I must laugh for ioy,
Before I can begin to tell my tale.

MOS. Let's heare them then, that I may laugh for company,

ALES. This morning M. Greene, dick greene, I meane,
From whome my husband had the Abby lande,
Came hether railing, for to know the trueth,
Whether my husband had the lands by grant.
I tould him all, where at he storm'd amain,
And swore he would cry quittance with the Churle ;
And if he did denye his entereft,
Stabbe him, whateuer did befall him selfe.
When as I sawe his choller thus to rise,
I whetted on the gentleman with words ;
And to conclude, Mosbie, at last we grew

To composition for my husband's death.

I gaue him ten pound to hyre knaues,
By some deuise to make away the Churle;

When he is dead he should haue twenty more,
And reposseffe his former lands againe.

On this we agreed, and he is ridden straight
To London, to bring his death about,

MOS. But call you this good newes?

ALES. I, sweete hart, be they not?

MOS. 'Twere cherefull newes to hear the Churle were dead,
But trust me, Ales, I take it passing ill,
You would be so forgetfull of our state,
To make recount of it to every groome.

What! to acquaint each stranger with our drifts,
Cheefely in case of murther; why 'tis the way
To make it open vnto Arden's selfe,

And bring thy selfe and me to ruine both:
Forewarn'de, foreearm'de, who threats his enemye,
Lends him a sword to garde himself with all.

ALES. I did it for the best,

MOS. Well, seeing 'tis don, chereely let it pas.
You know this Greene, is he not religious?
A man, I gesse, of great devotion,

ALES. He is.

MOS. Then, sweete Ales, let it pas, I have a dryft
Will quyet all, what euer is amis.

Here enters Clarke and Sufan.

ALES. How now, Clarke, have you found me false?
Did I not plead the matter hard for you?

CLA. You did,

MOS.

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MOS. And what, wil't be a match?

CLA. A match, I, faith, fir, I, the day is mine;
The Painter layes his cullours to the lyfe,
His pensel draws no shadowes in his loue,
Susan is mine,

ALES. You make her blushe.

MOS. What, sifter, is it Clarke must be the man?

SU. It resteth in your graunt, some words are past,
And happely we be grown vnto a match,
If you be willing that it shall be so.

MOS. Ah, Maister Clarke, it resteth at my grant;
You see my sifter's yet at my dispose;
But so you'le graunt me one thing I shall aske,
I am content my sifter shall be yours,

CLA. What is it, M. Mosbie?

MOS. I doo remember once, in secret talke,
You tould me how you could compound by arte,
A crucifix impoysoned:
That who so look'd vpon it should waxe blinde,
And with the scent he stifeled, that ere long,
He should be poyson'd that did view it wel.
I would haue you make me such a crucifix,
And then I'le grant my sifter shall be yours.

CLA. Though I am loath, because it toucheth lyfe,
Yet rather or I'le leaue sweete Susan's loue,
I'le do it, and with all the haste I may,
But for whome is it?

ALES. Leaue that to vs. Why, Clarke, is it possible,
That you should paint and draw it out your selfe,

The cullours beeing balefull, and impoysoned,
And no waies preiudice your selfe with all?

MOS. Well questioned, Ales.
Clarke, how answer you that?

CLA. Very easily: I'll tell you straight,
How I doo worke of these impoysoned drugs.
I fasten on my spectacles so close,
As nothing can any way offend my sight;
Then as I put a leafe within my nose,
So put I rubarbe, to avoid the smell,
And softly as another worke I paint.

MOS. 'Tis very well; but against when shall I haue it,

CLA. Within these ten dayes.

MOS. 'Twill serve the turne.
Now, Ales, let's in, and see what cheere you keepe.
I hope, now M. Arden is from home,
Youle giue me leaue to play your husband's part.

ALES. Mosbie you know whose maister of my hart,
As well may be the master of the house.

Exeunt.

Here enter GREENE and BRADSHAW.

BRAD. See you them that come yonder, M. Greene?

GRE. I, very well, doo you know them?

Here enter Blacke Will and Shakebagge.

BRAD. The one I knowe not, but he seemes a knave,
Cheefly for bearing the other company:

For

For such a slave, so vile a rogue as he,

Lyues not againe vppon the earth.

Black Will is his name : I tell you, M. Green,

At Bulloine he and I were fellow souldiers,

Where he plaid such pranks,

As all the Campe fear'd him for his villainy :

I warrant you he beares so bad a minde,

That for a crowne hee'le murder any man.

GRE. The fitter is he for my purpose, mary.

WILL. How now, fellow Bradshaw,
Whether away so earely ?

BRAD. O Will, times are changed, no fellow
Though we were once together in the field;
Yet thy freend to doo thee any good I can.

WILL. Why, Bradshawe, was not thou and I
Fellow souldiers at Bulloine :
Wher I was a corporall, and thou but a base mercenarye groome ?
No fellowes now, because you are a Gouldsmith,
And haue a lytle plate in your shoppe.
You were gladde to call me fellow Will,
And with a cursy to the earth,
One snatch, good corporall,
When I stole the halfe Oxe from John the vitler,
And domineer'd with it amongst good fellowes,
In one night.

BRAD. I, Will, those dayes are past to me.

WILL.

WILL. I, but they be not past with me,
For I kepe that same honourable minde still,
Good, neighbour Bradshaw, you are too proude to be my fellow,
But were it not that I see more company comming down
The hill, I would be fellowes with you once more,
And share Crownes with you too.
But let that pas, and tell me whether you goe.

BRAD. To London, Will, about a peece of seruice,
Wherein happely thou maist pleasure me.

WILL. What is it?

BRAD. Of late Lord Cheiny lost some plate,
Which one did bring, and sould it at my shoppe,
Saying he serued sir Antony Cooke.
A search was made, the plate was found with me,
And I am bound to answer at the Syse.
Now, Lord Cheiny solemnly vowes,
If law will serue him, he'le hang me for his plate,
Now I am going to London, vpon hope,
To finde the fellow: now, Will, I know
Thou art acquainted with such companions.

WILL. What manner of man was he?

BRAD. A leane faced withen knave,
Hauke nosse, and very hollow eied,
With mightye furrowes in his stormye browes;
Long haire down his shoulders curled,
His Chinne was bare, but on his vpper lippe,
A mutchado, which he wound about his eare.

WILL. What apparell had he?

BRAD. A watchet fattin doublet all so torne,
The inner side did beare the greatest show;

A paire of threed bare Velvet hose, seame rent,
 A wosted stocking rent about the shoe,
 A livery cloake, but all the lace was off,
 'Twas bad, but yet it serued to hide the plate.

WILL. Sirra Shakebagge, canst thou remember
 Since we tould the boule at Sittingburn,
 Where I broke the Tapster's head of the Lyon
 With a Cudgill sticke?

BRAD. I, very well, Will.

WILL. Why it was with the money that the plate was sould for:
 Sirra Bradshaw, what wilt thou give him
 That can tell thee who sould the plate?

BRAD. Who, I pray thee, good Will?

WILL. Why 'twas one Jacke Fitten,
 He's now in Newgate for stealing a horse,
 And shall be arrainde the next Sife.

BRAD. Why then, let Lord Cheiney seek Jack Fitten forth;
 For I'll backe and tell him who robbed him of his plate,
 This cheeres my hart; M. Greene, I'll leave you,
 For I must to the Ile of Sheppy with speede.

GRE. Before you go, let me intreat you
 To carry this letter to Mistres Arden of Fevershame,
 And humbly recommend me to her selfe.

BRAD. That will I, M. Greene, and so farewell.
 Heer, Will, there's a crowne for thy good newes.

Exit Bradshaw.

WILL. Farewell, Bradshaw,
 I'll drinke no water for thy sake, whilest this lasts:
 Now, Gentlemen, shall we haue your company to London?

GRE,

GRE. Nay stay, firs, a lyttle more, I needes must vse your helpe,
And in a matter of great consequence;
Wherein if you'le be secret and profound,
I'le give you twenty Angles for your paines.

WILL. How! twenty Angles? Give my Fellow
George Shakebag and me twenty Angles,
And if thou'lt haue thy owne father slaine,
That thou may'ft inherite his land, wee'le kill him.

Shak. I, thy mother, thy sifter, thy brother, or all thy kin.

GRE. Well this it is, Arden of Fevershame
Hath highly wrong'd me about the Abby land,
That no revendge but death will serve the turne:
Will you two kill him, here are the Angles downe,
And I will lay the platforme of his death.

WILL. Plat me no platformes, giue me the money,
And I'le stab him as he stands pissing against a wall,
But I'le kill him.

SHAK. Where is he?

GRE. He is now at London, in Aldersgate streete.

SHAK. He's dead as if he had beene condemn'd
By an act of parliament, if once Black Will and I
Sweare his death.

GRE. Here is ten pound, and when he is dead,
Ye shall have twenty more.

WILL. My fingers itche to be at the pefant,
Ah that I might be fet a worke thus through the yeere,
And that murther would grow to an occupation;
That a man might without danger of law:
Zounds, I warrant I should be warden of the company,
Come, let vs be going, and we'le bate at Rocheffer,

Where I'll give thee a gallon of Sack,
To hanfell the match with all.

[Exeunt.]

Here enters Michael.

MICH. I haue gotten suche a letter,
As will touche the Painter: And thus it is.

Here enter Arden and Francklin, and heare

Michael read this letter.

My duetye remembred, Mrs. Susan, hoping in God you be in good health, as I Michaell was at the making beereof. This is to certifie you, that as the Turtle true, when she hath lost her mate, sitteth alone; so I, mourning for your absence, do walk vp and down Poules, till one day I fell asleepe, and lost my maister's Pantophelles. Ah, mistres Susan abolish that paltry Painter, cut him off by the shinnes, with a frowning looke of your crabed countenance, and think vpon Michaell, who druncke with the dregges of your fauour, wil cleaue as fast to your loue, as a plaster of Pitch to a gald horses back. Thus hoping you will let my passions penetrate, or rather impetrate mercy of your meeke hands, I end

Yours, Michaell, or els not Michaell.

ARD. Why you paltrie knaue,
Stand you here loytering, knowing my affaires,
What haste my busines craues to fend to Kent?

FRAN. Faith, frend Michaell, this is very ill,
Knowing your maister hath no more but you,
And do ye slacke his busines for your own?

ARD. Where is the letter, sirra, let me see it

❖ *Then he gives him the letter.*

See, maister Francklin, here is proper stuffe,
Susan my maide, the Painter, and my man,
A crue of harlots all in love forsooth,

Sirra,

Sirra, let me hear no more of this,

Nor for thy lyfe once write to her a worde.

Here enter Greene, Will, and Shakebag.

Wilt thou be married to so base a troull,

'Tis Mosbie's sister: come I once at home,

I'll rouse her from remaining in my house.

Now, M. Francklin, let's go walke in Paule's,

Come, but a turne or two, and then away.

(Exeunt.

GRE. The first is Arden, and that's his man,

The other is Francklin, Arden's dearest Freend,

WILL. Zounds, I'll kill them all three.

GRE. Nay, firs, touch not his man in any case,

But stand close, and take you fittest standing,

And at his coming foorth speede him:

To the Nagge's head, there is this coward's haunt;

But now I'll leaue you till the deede be don.

Exit Greene.

SHAK. If he be not paid his owne, nere trust Shakebagge.

WILL. Sirra, Shakbag, at his comming foorth

I'll runne him through, and then to the blackfreers,

And there take water and away.

SHAK. Why, that's the best; but see thou misse him not.

WILL. How can I misse him, when I thinke on the fortye

Angels I must haue more.

Here enters a Prentise.

PREN. 'Tis very late, I were best shute vp my stall,

For here will be oulde filching when the presse comes foorth

Of Paules.

❖ Then lettes he downe his window, and it breaks Black Wil's head.

WILL. Zounds, draw, Shakbag, draw, I am almost kild.

PREN.

PREN. We'le tame you, I warrant.

WIL. Zounds, I am tame enough already.

Here enter Arden, Francklin, and Michael.

ARD. What troublesome fray or mutiny is this?

FRAN. 'Tis nothing but some babling paltry fray,
Deuised to pick mens pockets in the throng.

ARD. Is't nothing els? Come, Francklin, let vs away.

Exeunt,

WILL. What mends shal I haue for my broken head?

PREN. Mary, this mends, that if you get you not away
All the sooner, you shall be well beaten, and sent to the counter.

Exit prentise.

WILL. Well I'le be gone, but looke to your signes,
For I'le pull them downe all.

Shakbag, my broken head greeues me not so much,
As by this meanes Arden hath escaped.

Here enters Greene.

GRE. I had a glimpse of him and his companion.
Why, firs, Arden's as wel as I,
I met him and Francklin going merrilly to the ordinary againe,
What, dare you not do it?

WILL. Yes, fir, we dare do it, but were my consent to giue,
We would not do it vnder ten pound more.
I value euery drop of my blood at a french Crowne.
I haue had ten pound to steal a dogge,
And we haue no more heere to kill a man;
But that a bargane is a bargane, and so forth,
You should do it yourselfe.

GRE. I pray thee how came thy head broke?

WILL. Why, thou seest it is broke, dost thou not?

SHAK.

SHAK. Standing against a staule, watching Arden's coming,
A boy let down his shop window, and broke his head.
Whereupon arose a braul, and in the tumult
Arden escapt vs, and past by vnthought on;
But forberance is no acquittance,
Another time wele do it, I warrant thee.

GRE. I pray thee, Will, make cleane thy bloodie brow,
And let's bethink vs on some other place,
Where Arden may be met with handfomly;
Remember how devoutly thou hast sworne,
To kill the villaine thinke upon thyne oath.

WILL. Tush, I haue broken fiae hundred oathes,
But would'st thou charme me to effect this dede,
Tell me of gould, my resolution's fee.
Say, thou seeft Mosbie kneeling at my knees,
Off'ring me seruice for my high attempt:
And sweete Ales Arden, with a lap of crownes,
Come, with a lowly curfy to the earth,
Saying, Take this; but for thy quarterige,
Such yeerely tribute will I answer thee.
Why this would steel soft mettled cowardice,
With which Black Will was neuer tainted yet.
I tell thee, Greene, the forlorne trauailler,
Whose lips are glewed with sommers parching heat,
Nere long'd so much to see a running brooke,
As I to finish Arden's Tragedy.
Seeft thou this goare that cleaueth to my face?
From hence nere will I wash this bloody staine,
'Till Arden's hart be panting in my hand.

GRE. Why that's well said, but what says Shakbag?

SHAK.

SHAK. I cannot paint my valour out with words,
 But giue me place and opportunitie,
 Such mercy as the staruen Lyones,
 When she is dry-suckt of her eager younge,
 Showes to the prey that next encounters her,
 On Arden so much pittie would I take.

GRE. So should it faire with men of firme resolute,
 And now, sirs, seeing this accident,
 Of meeting him in Paules hath no successe,
 Let vs bethinke vs on some other place,
 Whose earth may swallow up this Arden's bloode.

Here enters Michael.

See yonder comes his man, and wat you what,
 The foolish knaue's in loue with Mosbie's sifter,
 And for her sake, whose loue he cannot get,
 Unlesse Mosbie sollicit his suite.
 The villaine hath sworne the slaughter of his maister,
 We'le question him, for he may stead vs muche:
 How now, Michael, whether are you going?

MICH. My maister hath new supt,
 And I am going to prepare his chamber.

GRE. Where supt M. Arden?

MICH. At the Nagge's head at the 18 pence ordinarye,
 How now, M. Shakbag, what Black Wil,
 Gods deere lady, how chaunce your face is so bloody?

WILL. Go too, firra, there is a chaunce in it,
 This sawcines in you will make you be knockt.

MICH. Nay, and you be offended I'le be gone.

GRE. Stay, Michael, you may not escape vs so,
 Michael I know you loue your maister wel.

MICH.

MICH. Why so I do, but wherefore vrdege you that?

GRE. Because I thinke you loue your mistres better.

MICH. So thinke not I, but say, y'faith what if I should?

SHAK. Come; to the purpose, Michael, we heare
You haue a pretty loue in Feversham.

MICH. Why, haue I two or three, what's that to thee?

WILL. You deale too mildly with the pesant; thus it is,
'Tis know'n to vs that you loue Mosbie's sister.

We know besides that you have tak'n your oath,

To further Mosbie to your mistres' bed,

And kill your maister, for his sister's sake.

Now, sir, a poorer coward than your selfe,

Was neuer foster'd in the coast of Kent.

How comes it then, that such a knaue as you

Dare sweare a matter of such consequence?

GRE. Ah, Will!

WILL. Tush, give me leaue, there is no more but this,

Sith thou hast sworne, we dare discouer all;

And hadst thou, or shouldst thou vtter it,

We haue deuised a complot vnder hand,

What euer shall betide to any of vs,

To send thee roundly to the diuell of hell.

And therefore thus: I am the very man,

Markt in my birth howre by the destynies,

To giue an end to Arden's lyfe on earth;

Thou but a member, but to whet the knife,

Whose edge must search the closet of his breast.

Thy office is but to appoint the place,

And traine thy maister to his tragedy;

Myne to performe it, when occasion serues.

F

Then

Then be not nice, but here deuise with vs,
How, and what way, we may conclude his death.

SHAK. So shalt thou purchase Mosbie for thy friend,
And, by his frendship, gaine his sifter's loue.

GRE. So shal thy mistres be thy fauorer,
And thou disburdned of the oath thou made.

MICH. Well, gentlemen, I cannot but confesse,
Sith you haue vrdged me so aparantly,
That I haue vowed my Master Arden's death;
And he, whose kindly loue and liberall hand,
Doth challenge naught but good deserts of me,
I will delyver ouer to your hands.

This night come to his house at Aldersgate,
The dores I'll leaue vnlockt against you come.
No sooner shall ye enter through the latch,
Ouer the thresholde to the inner court,
But on your left hand shall you see the staires,
That leads directly to my maister's chamber.
There take him, and dispose him as you please.
Now it were good we parted company,
What I haue promised I will performe.

WILL. Should you deceiue vs, 'twould go wrong w'you,

MICH. I will accomplish al I haue reuealde.

WILL. Come, let's go drinke, choller makes me as drye as a dog.

[Exeunt Will, Greene, and Shakbag.

Manet MICHAEL.

MICH. Thus feedes the Lambe securely on the downe,
Whilft through the thicket of an arber brake,
The hunger bitten Woulfe orepyres his hant,
And takes advantage to eat him vp.

Ah!

Ah! harmles Arden, how hast thou misdane,
That thus thy gentle lyfe is leuel'd at,
The many good turnes that thou hast don to me,
Now must I quittance with betraying thee.
I that should take the weapon in my hand,
And buckler thee from ill intending foes,
Do lead thee, with a wicked fraudfull smile,
As unsuspected, to the slaughter house.
So haue I sworne to Mosby and my mistres;
So haue I promised to the slaughter men:
And should I not deale currently with them,
Their lawless rage would take reuenge on me.
Tush, I will spurn at mercy for this once;
Let pittie lodge where feeble women ly,
I am resolu'd, and Arden needes must die.

[Exit Michael.

Here enter Arden and Francklin.

No, Francklin, no, if feare or stormy threts,
If loue of me, or care of womenhoode,
If feare of God, or common speach of men,
Who mangle credit with their wounding words,
And cooh dishonor as dishonor buds,
Might ioyne repentaunce in her wanton thoughts,
No question then but she would turne the leafe,
And sorrow for her dissolution:
But she is rooted in her wickednes;
Peruerse and stubborne, not to be reclaim'de;
Good counselle is to her as raine to weedes,
And reprehension makes her vice to grow,
As Hydraes head, that perisht by decay.

36 The TRAGEDY of M. ARDEN.

Her faults, methinks, are painted in my face,
For euery searching eye to ouer reede,
And Mosbie's name, a scandale vnto myne,
Is deeply trenched in my blushing brow.
Ah ! Francklin, Franklin, when I think on this,
My hart's greefe rends my other powers,
Worse then the conflict at the houre of death.

FRANK. Gentle Arden, leave this sad lament,
She will amend, and so your greeces will cease,
Or els she'le die, and so your sorrows end.
If neither of these two do happely fall,
Yet let your comfort be, that others beare
Your woes twice doubled all with patience.

ARD. My house is irksome, there I cannot rest.

FRAN. Then stay with me in London, go not home.

ARD. Then that base Mosbie doth vsurpe my roome,
And makes his triumph of my beeing thence.
At home, or not at home, where ere I be,
Heere, heere it lies ; ah, Francklin, here it lies,
That will not out till wretched Arden dies.

Here enters Michaell.

FRANK. Forget your greeces a while, heer 'coms your man,

ARD. What a clock ist, firra ?

MICH. Almost ten.

ARD. See, see, how runnes away the weary time,
Come, M. Franklin, shall we go to bed.

[Exeunt Arden and Michaell.]

Manet Francklin.

FRAN. I pray you go before, I'le follow you,
Ah, what a hell is fretfull Jelousie !

What

What pittie moving words ! what deepe fetcht sighs !
 What greeuous grones, and ouerlading woes,
 Accompanie this gentle gentleman !
 Now will he shake his care oppressed head,
 Then fix his sad eies on the sollen earth,
 Asham'd to gaze vpon the open world.
 Now will he cast his eyes vp towards the heaueus,
 Looking that waies for a redresse of wrong :
 Some times he seeketh to beguile his grieffe,
 And tells a story with his carefull tongue.
 Then comes his wyfe's dishonor in his thoughts,
 And in the middle cutteth off his tale,
 Pow'ring fresh sorrow on his weary lims.
 So woe begone, so inlye charged with woe,
 Was neuer any liyed, and bare it so.

Here enters Michael.

MICH. My master would desire you come to bed.

FRAN. Is he himselfe already in his bed ?

[Exit Franklin,

Manet Michael.

MICH. He is, and faine would haue the light away,
 Consiſting thoughts incamped in my brest,
 Awake me with the echo of their strokes :
 And I a iudge to censure either side,
 Can giue to neither wished victory.
 My master's kindnes pleads to me for lyfe,
 With iust demaund, and I must grant it him.
 My mistres she hath forced me with an oath,
 For Susan's sake, the which I may not breake,
 For that is nearer then a master's loue ;

That

That grim faced fellow, pittiles black Will,
 And Shakebag stearne in bloody stratageme,
 Two ruffer Ruffins neuer liued in Kent,
 Haue sworne my death if I infrindge my vow.
 A dreadfull thing to be considered of,
 Me thinks I see them with their bolstred haire,
 Staring and grinning in thy gentle face,
 And in their ruthles hands their daggers drawne,
 Insulting ore thee with a peck of oathes,
 Whilest thou submissive pleading for releefe,
 Art mangled by their ireful Instruments,
 Me thinks I heare them aske where Michaell is
 And pittiles black Will, cries stab the slaue,
 The pesant will detect the Tragedy.
 The wrinckles in his fowle death threatning face,
 Gapes open wide, lyke graues to swallow men.
 My death to him is but a merriment,
 And he will murther me to make him sport.
 He comes, he comes, ah! master Francklin, helpe,
 Call vp the neighbors, or we are but dead.

Here enter Francklin and Arden.

FRAN. What dismal outcry cals me from my rest?

ARD. What hath occasion'd such a fearefull crye?
 Speake, Michael, hath any iniur'de thee?

MICH. Nothing, sir; but as I fell asleepe,
 Upon the thresholde leaning to the staires,
 I had a fearfull dreame that troubled me,
 And in my slumber thought I was beset,
 With murtherer theeuues, that came to rife me.

My

My trembling ioints witness my inward feare,
I craue your pardons for disturbing you.

ARD. So great a cry for nothing I nere heard,
What, are the doores fast lockt, and al things safe?

MICH. I cannot tel, I thinke I lockt the doores.

ARD. I like not this, but Ile go see my selfe,
Nere trust me, but the doores were all vnlockt,
This negligence not halfe contenteth me;
Get you to bed, and if you loue my fauor,
Let me haue no more such pranckes as these.
Come, Master Francklin, let vs go to bed.

FRAN. I, by my faith, the aire is very colde,
Michaell, farewell, I pray thee dream no more,

Here enter Will, Greene, and Shakbag.

SHAK. Black night hath hid the pleasure of the day,
And shetimg darkness ouerhangs the earth,
And with the black folde of her cloudy robe,
Obscures vs from the eiesight of the worlde,
In which swete silence such as we triumph.
The laysie minuts linger on their time,
As loth to giue due audit to the howre:
'Til in the watch our purpose be compleat,
And Arden sent to euerlasting night.
Greene, get you gone, and linger here about,
And at some houre hence, come to vs againe,
Where we will giue you instance of his death.

GRE. Speede to my wish, whose wil so ere says no,
And so i'll leaue you for an howre or two.

Exit Greene.

WILL. I tell thee, Shakbag, would this thing wer done,

I am

I am so heauy that I can scarce go :

This drowfines in me bods little good.

SHAK. How now, Will, become a preciffian.

Nay then, let's go sleepe ; when bugs and feares,

Shall kill our courages with their fancies worke,

WILL. Why, Shakbagge, thou mistakes me much,

And wrongs me too in telling me of feare,

Wert not a serious thing we go about,

It should be slipt, till I had fought with thee :

To let thee know I am no coward I,

I tell thee, Shakbag, thou abufest me.

SHAK. Why thy speech bewraied an inlye kind of feare,

And fauour'd of a weak relenting spirit,

Go forward now in that we have begonne,

And afterwards attempt me when thou darest.

WILL. And if I do not, heauen cut me off ;

But let that passe, and shoue me to this house.

Where thou shalt see I'll do as much as Shakbag.

SHAK. This is the doore, but soft, me thinks 'tis shut,

The villaine Michaell hath deceived vs.

WILL. Soft, let me see, Shakbag, 'tis shut indeed.

Knock with thy sword, perhaps the slaue will heare.

SHAK. It will not be, the white liuered pefant is gone to bed,

And laughs vs both to scorn.

WILL. And he shall buy his merriment as deare,

As euer coiftrel bought so little sport ;

Nere let this sword affist me when I neede,

But rust and canker after I have sworne :

If I, the next time that I meet the hind,

Loppe not away his legge, his arme, or both.

SHAK.

That wisdom doubts, tho' 'tis indeed one thing,
 Or to despise, or use, and balance both.
 I have so little footing in this life
 Firm to my thoughts, that it could not support me
 To live out one day more, did I not look
 To reasons in the depths of providence ;
 For I must own, Agathopus, I think,
 These things are not in vain : Our Maker's hand
 Hath plac'd some virtue in this earthly process
 To work us in the end surprizing good.

A G A T H O P U S.

O Philo, from the cross of Christ alone
 Derive thy good ! His church is a new world,
 Where all thy fate and all thy business lie.
 And since thou'rt cold about a speedy passage
 Into thy Master's joy, I must at least
 Question thy christian hope. Feel'st thou the pledge
 Of blessed resurrection ? Does thy heart
 Within thee leap to meet the last great scenes ?

P H I L O.

Tho' well persuaded that these sins of mine,
 Incumbrances so massy to the zeal
 Of a whole mortal life, will ne'er resist
 When the great Father shall one day shine forth,
 Restoring exil'd man ; yet scarce I dare
 Connect myself and glory in one thought :
 I do but cast me in the croud of beings
 On God's broad mercy, as a mighty tide
 Bearing it's peevish offspring safe to harbour.

F

A G A T H O -

AGATHOPUS.

I understand thee, Philo, and may'st thou
 Now understand how far below the gospel
 Thy soul consents to dwell. The friends of Christ
 Don't strive with sin, but trample under foot
 It's poor exploded antiquated strength.
 They don't rely on some benign event
 From the wide wheel of things, but pierce directly
 Where Jesus now admits them, and ordains
 Their thrones in bliss : Hence they in spirit stand,
 Free from all spot, amidst the train of heaven,
 And see God's face, whose full and constant smile
 Doth so attend them thro' the wilds of life,
 That natural dejection, flitting fears
 And all vicissitude is swallow'd up
 In one still dawn of that eternal day——
 But see the rev'rend bishop coming forth.

Enter I G N A T I U S.

I G N A T I U S.

I hope, my sons, at this important season
 No idle talk employ'd you : Learn betimes
 With tender sense to bear the church's burden.
 But I must praise the place where you have chose
 Your morning stand. For hence we look around
 And see so many roofs, where pray'r incessant,
 With mighty thoughts of heart and fervent faith,
 Is offer'd up to heav'n. Hear Thou, my Lord,
 Thy people's voice and give them peace this day !

AGATHO-

A G A T H O P U S.

Our meditations, father, were the same
With yours, about th' impending persecution.

I G N A T I U S.

And don't you think it strange, Agathopus,
And Philo, ministers and witnesses
Of the mere love and innocent meek life
Of christians, that they should be hated thus ?

A G A T H O P U S.

The laws of Christ condemn a vicious world,
And gall it to revenge.

I G N A T I U S.

Tho' that be true,
Yet still our human foes are chiefly found
Poor instruments t' exert a foreign malice,
Whose depth and horror is beyond the heart
Of silly flesh and blood. That ancient rival
Of God's dear Son pursues the potentate
In us his subjects, and retains the nations
With all th' enchanting sweet and pow'r of evil,
To form his wretched pomp and fight his war.
When heathen hosts attack'd of old the race
Of chosen Israel, 'twas in truth a siege
Sustain'd by Jesus in his little fort
From the dark legions. Then the outstretch'd arm,
But now, the cross must conquer. Tell me therefore
As in your ministries you have observ'd,
How would my flock receive that bitter cup ?

P H I L O.

Firm in the faith.

A G A T H O P U S.

Ardent for martyrdom !

I yesterday convey'd to a poor man
His dole of public alms : " Give me," said he,
" But one day's bread ; I hope to want no more."
Husband and wife and other friends take leave
Each time they're call'd from one another's fight,
As not to meet 'till in the world of spirits.
When at their work, " Fulfil your task," they cry,
" Poor hands ; this drudgery will soon be o'er !"
At meals is scripture read ! They seem to need
No *earthly food* : Is resurrection nam'd ?
They loath *it*. Children now intelligent
Above their years, mark all their father says,
Look in his face and cry, " Shan't we die too ?"
The father in the slumbers of the night
Sees a bright angel wave him to the tortures ;
He cries, " I come !" And when he wakes, he finds
His spir't half loosen'd from his mortal prison.
The women now think of no ornaments
But shackles : Every bosom, weak before,
For the grand trial a big soul reserves.
Already to the lot of martyrs rais'd
All see each other. Ev'ry face more shining
And more august each little threshold seems.

I G N A T I U S.

I'm glad my people are so well prepar'd.
But I've a secret hope, that providence

Means

Means not so much : The blow of persecution
May light indeed, but yet stop short of them.
Trajanus is accounted far from cruel,
Most gentle in the gen'ral and humane :
Perhaps it will content him to chastise
Numbers in one. How joyfully should I
Buy the flock's safety with my single danger !
But come, Agathopus, our holy books
Must be hid somewhere, for they shall not die.

[*Exeunt Ignat. & Agath.*

PHILO.

Reversing thy proposal, O Ignatius,
How many lives in Antioch would redeem
Thy single breath ! But heav'n's great law (we own)
Pleads on thy side : which loves to snatch away
The tallest saint, and force his raw dependents,
Forsaken branches, to strike root themselves.

[*Noise without.*

I know that noise ; it is the Emperor's chariot :
He fails not daily on a plain hard by
To exercise his soldiers. He went out
This morning with the dawn. O let him teach
Us to be wise, and wage a better warfare,
With vigilance as earnest and unweary'd !
But how is this ? Here 's part of his retinue
Bending this way. I'll stand aside and watch them.

Enter SOLDIERS.

First SOLDIER.

What should these christians be ? Methinks for once
I'd see what passes in their meeting.

Second

Second SOLDIER.

Fool,
 Their meeting's in the dark, where they commit
 Adultery and quaff the blood of infants.

First SOLDIER.

I cannot think so: They are simple people,
 Given to fancies, but of no ill meaning.

Second SOLDIER.

Why then should our wife Emp'ror be so bent
 Against them? As he drove thro' yonder gate,
 He cast his eye this way. "O here," says he,
 "In these back lanes and forlorn skirts of Antioch,
 "The new sect chiefly dwell. In vain do we
 "Give laws to nations, if the dregs of men
 "May thus outbrave us. Tho' to day we march
 "Onwards to Parthia, I must crush this evil
 "Before I stir. Some of you instantly
 "The christian bishop seek, and bring him to us."

Third SOLDIER.

But now 'tis time to ask which is his door;
 And see, here's one can tell us: Friend, where lives
 Ignatius?

P H I L O.

There, the house is just before you.

[*Exeunt* Soldiers.]

Good Shepherd! soon his wish was heard. O Lord,
 Grant him thy strength, and guide what now en-
 sues.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

S C E N E II.

SCENE changes to a Room of State.

TRAJAN seated and attended. IGNATIUS brought in
by the Soldiers.

TRAJAN.

What art thou, Wretch! push'd on by thy ill genius,
Not only to oppose my will, nor own
The gods of Rome, but other simple souls
Inveigle to their ruin!

IGNATIUS.

Noble Emperor,
I bear (and not in vain, thro' grace divine)
A name of better import than to be
Or wretched or demoniac. No, the man
Who is Theophorus can ne'er want joy,
Is rais'd above the reach of misery,
Is freed from dæmon's pow'r; nor only freed,
But able to controul and scourge the foe.
As I with ease their ev'ry snare dissolve,
Sustain'd by Christ the heav'nly King.

TRAJAN.

Explain,
What mean'st thou by the name Theophorus?

IGNA-

I G N A T I U S.

'Tis he, whose soul is ever full of God,
'Tis he, who carries Christ within his breast.

T R A J A N.

And think'st thou that in us no gods reside,
Enjoying as we do their aid in battle?

I G N A T I U S.

Whom you call gods, and misinform'd adore,
Are dæmons of the nations. One alone
True God there is, who made the earth and sky,
And all things in them; and one Jesus Christ,
Son of his love, whose kingdom be my portion!

T R A J A N.

Thou mean'st the same whom Pilate crucify'd?

I G N A T I U S.

Him I do mean who crucify'd my sin,
Together with it's author; and subdued
The realm of darkness (gladly I repeat
What I on this occasion prove and feel).
Under their feet who carry him in heart.

T R A J A N.

So then the Crucify'd lives yet in thee?

I G N A T I U S.

He does; for thus the gracious promise runs,
"In them I'll walk and in their hearts I'll dwell."

T R A J A N.

T R A J A N.

Thus, therefore, I conclude : Since this fond man
Affirms with frantic phrase, that still in him
The Crim'nal lives, whom to the cross we doom'd,
Let him be carried to Imperial Rome,
And, worry'd by wild beasts, divert the people.
Ten of our soldiers guard him ; and just now
Put on his chains. We'll haste to higher cares.
From quell'd opinions pass to conquer lands.

They put on IGNATIUS's Chains.

[Exit TRAJAN.

I G N A T I U S.

Pursue thy glory, Trajan ; I of mine
Am now possess'd : Thanks to my gracious Lord,
That for his love and faith in his firm word
I'm bound in irons with the great St. Paul,
Am call'd to suff'rings, and can bless the call !

End of the First ACT,





A C T II.

S C E N E I.

SCENE the Christian's Place of religious Assemblies.

The People coming in at the lower End of the Place.

AGATHOPUS. PHILO.

AGATHOPUS.

HOW happy is our office, thus to stand
 And serve the brotherhood; dispatch th' affairs.
 And by a nearer view admire the graces,
 Peculiar sentiments, and vary'd virtue
 Of thousand lovely souls all taught of God!
 Nay, ev'n so often to tell over names
 And faces mark'd for glory, gives a pleasure,
 Like that wherewith the prophet's angel once
 Shall pass along, sealing the sons of light.

PHILO.

I sadly mourn those few whose lapse and frailty
 Hath raz'd them from our list; but real seems
 Their

Their penitence, tho' scarce fulfill'd it's period :
Shall we propose them to the bishop's mercy ‡ ?

A G A T H O P U S.

Yes, at this time, for persecution's hour
The canon supersedes. Now guilty souls,
Releas'd from other discipline, have leave
To purge their sins in blood ; and blushing bear
The rank of faithful with them to the dead.
Now also the young hearts of catechumens
Should be admitted to the christian voyage ;
Whose course, soon finish'd, may perhaps ne'er
know

That gradual conflux of temptations waves
Which meets and shakes our common perseverance.
But where is Dirce ? We must speak with her.

P H I L O.

Yonder she is.

A G A T H O P U S.

Then beckon to her Philo.

(PHILO beckons, and DIRCE comes up to them.)

A G A T H O P U S.

My sister, this is the last time you 'll see
Our gentle bishop ; therefore now consider

‡ In the primitive church the times of separation from the church was shortened to those who had fallen under censure, by the recommendations of confessors, or those going to suffer martyrdom.

If there be any soul under your hand
That he may be of use to.

D I R C E.

The good bishop
Is useful like the day, a gen'ral guide
And comfort to us in our sev'ral paths;
But otherwise, there's none within my charge
Wants any more partic'lar ray of light.

A G A T H O P U S.

None prone to sadness, or perplext with doubts?

D I R C E.

That case I own is frequent in our sex,
From tenderness of frame, and more sincere
And close attention to religious cares.
But all at present walk in such strong works,
And fervent darings of exerted zeal,
That there's no room for scruples or for clouds
To gather on the soul. Each softest mind
Stands now above its usual lets and fears
As in another region; and collected
Into itself, secure of Christ within,
Darts with a bolder motion thro' this life,
Nor needs the friend, and breaks thro' ev'ry foe.

P H I L O.

This is a pastor's joy, when his whole flock
So full of Christ, use him for order's sake
As if they us'd him not. But what's become
Of the design'd espousals of Maria,

For

For learning fam'd, and by Ignatius deem'd
 Pattern of female virtues, with the brother
 Approv'd of by her?

DIRCE.

At this awful time,
 When both so soon above mortality
 May be with Christ, they drop with joint consent
 Such thoughts, though holy, nor unworthy those
 Who love the Lord no less, but at more distance
 Wait to put on the privilege of angels.
 Maria now breathes her devoted heart
 In pray'r; is far superior to poor hopes
 From ought beneath the skies. Yet as she saw
 Worth in that brother, and the grace of Christ
 Bright'ning his soul, she does not still disdain
 The thought of meeting him among blest myriads
 With some peculiar and immortal friendship.

AGATHOPUS.

My Dirce, thou hast been for sev'ral years
 A faithful leader of the lambs of Christ;
 And many souls by thy maternal voice,
 In the hard conflict and the wav'ring hour,
 Have took the courage to cast off this world:
 Thou may'st expect, if any female blood
 Is shed, it will be thine.

DIRCE.

Welcome the day!
 I think I have some blood about my heart,
 Tho'

Tho' cold and wither'd in this outward frame,
That would not shun to be pour'd out for Jesus.

P H I L O.

Behold the people in great numbers present.

A G A T H O P U S.

I'll speak to them.—My brethren and my sisters,
To your respective places. You shall hear
Once more the good Ignatius. With much pain
He has the guard's consent—O! here he is.

Enter IGNATIUS, guarded by the Soldiers.

I G N A T I U S.

I thank you for your gentleness, my keepers!
My speech is first to you, and if there's here
Any beside a stranger to our faith.
Here 'tis we meet; and you shall hear our doctrine,
Which, as you truly say, is mostly taught
In corners. But this secrecy, not guilt,
But meekness that would not offend, persuades.
Our holy purpose and our pure assembly
Fears not the light, but asks a fuller light
Than this weak world can see by. That great day
Which is reveal'd in fire, and in the blaze
Of highest truth and reason, shall approve
What we poor worms have acted in this place.
And angels, who are fixt attendants here,
When they report in language of their world,
The hymn, the pray'r, the fellowship of saints,
It sounds nor crime nor folly. True it is,
We differ somewhat in our form of life

From

From other men. And singularity,
 If needless and fantastic, has no comfort
 When public hatred frowns. Nor would that scheme
 Deserve the stress of suff'ring zeal, whose worth
 Lay in fine notions; but could not relieve
 With real strength the lab'ring heart, nor alter,
 By operation deep, our wretched being.
 But if, by seal of God and true experience
 Of some few happy souls, a doctrine stands
 Commended, as the med'cine of our nature,
 Which ev'ry seed of woe subdues within;
 Then, sure, amidst the anger of sick minds,
 Amidst all dangers of the friendly teacher,
 It must be taught. And such is our religion,
 Great in itself by solid gifts of grace;
 It's lovely secret healthful to mankind.
 This we hold forth, couch'd under decent rites,
 Which, while you look upon as singular,
 Are us'd with social heart. For thus we think,
 You now idolaters do darkly mean
 The God we serve, and will with vast relentings
 Discover him at last.——

SOLDIERS.

Old man forbear!
 You've liberty to speak, but not disparage
 The Emperor's religion.

I G N A T I U S.

Now to you,
 Belov'd in Christ, I turn. I have asserted
 What

What you'll attest, that as by proper laws
And many special customs we are sever'd
A chosen body from the world about us ;
So the distinction well is justified
By inward graces and peculiar bliss
Within this body felt. Are there not here
Men who can say, in soberness and truth,
That guilt is done away, and innocence
Fearless and free restor'd within their breasts ?
That vice with dark inextricable bands
No more detains, nor drives to acts of shame
The blushing, reasoning, reluctant mind ?
That for the passions which by turns inspire
The worthless life of nature, anger, sloth,
And avarice, and pride, pure love prevails,
Kindled by heaven, nor by a bad world quench'd ?
That they have inwardly exchang'd their climate,
And pass'd from death to life ; so that their heart,
Heal'd and exulting from it's deep recess,
Returns this answer : That the pow'r of evil,
The sting of pain, and terrors of the grave,
Are now no more ; or but at distance rage
In faithless minds ; while not a dart can reach
Their citadel of peace in Jesu's love ?
That they, in short, to God's paternal face
And firm affection can appeal and look,
Nor earthly griefs dare intercept the prospect ;
But still to every want they feel as men,
To every priestly charitable pray'r
They breathe as saints of God ; his ear and pow'r
Are nigh : till thus, by constant use and proof

Of

Of aid coelestial, heav'n is more than earth
 Their home, the country of their heart and
 commerce?

If thus it is, and has been felt amongst us,
 What can I say but this, Value and keep
 Your happiness in Christ! Weak are my words
 To teach whom he enlightens. Glad I am,
 However, that his love has fir'd my tongue
 To bear such witness to his grace and blood,
 As mov'd you oft to make a deeper search
 Into that mystery; till a glance from Him,
 Fraught with the thing itself, left you and me
 Happy and dumb before our bounteous Lord
As I now am. O Jesu, thou art all!

A G A T H O P U S.

Father, the penitents with tears beseech you
 To think of them before you go.

I G N A T I U S.

Poor Men!

Let them draw near; declare the truth, my Sons.
 To leave the loving Saviour, is it not
 A bitter thing? Is it not worse than death?
 Have you enjoy'd one easy hour by all
 That human wealth or wisdom could do for you,
 While wretchedly by sin cut off from Him
 And from his people's fellowship?

P E N I T E N T S.

O no!

Thro' desarts we have walk'd and found no rest.

H

I G N A -

I G N A T I U S.

Then may you find it now ! May our good Lord
 Shine forth again with healing aspect on you !
 Be as you were before with him and us !
 Only remember, that the life of faith
 Loses in joy and lustre by each fall,
 Altho' the substance be retriev'd.

P E N I T E N T S.

Dear Saviour,
 Receive us to the meanest of thy mansions !

P H I L O.

The catechumens too your pleasure wait.

I G N A T I U S.

Come hither ye, whom from an evil world
 The name of Jesus draws ! you count him sweet,
 And great, and mighty, by that glimm'ring light
 Your novice minds have gain'd. You venerate
 That full acquaintance, and that vital union
 Whereby the faithful know him : And to this
 You now aspire. But can you then let go
 Your manly wisdom, and become as babes
 To learn new maxims and the mind of Christ ?
 Can you forsake your former ease and sun-shine
 T' associate with a poor afflicted people,
 The scorn of all mankind ? Can you the weight
 Of your whole souls, with all your hopes of God,
 Rest on a long past action ; and that such
 As your Lord's mystic but opprobrious death ;
 Or on events which visionary seem,

A resur-

A resurrection, and some second world?
 Can you such gratitude and sov'reign love
 Contract for One, who but with grace unseen
 Assists you inwardly; that for His sake
 You'll crucify your flesh, curb your own will,
 And nothing but his servants be in life?
 Dare you henceforward undertake these things?

C A T E C H U M E N S.

We have consider'd them, and by God's help
 We dare.

I G N A T I U S.

Then you shall soon, by sacred rites,
 Among us be admitted: and mean while,
 If dear and blessed you account this day,
 Sing your first praises to your Master's honour.

C A T E C H U M E N S *sing:*

I.

O thou, who dost lead each ignorant lamb
 Of thy royal flock in Wisdom's bright ways,
 Enable thy children, close knit in thy name,
 Thee, Christ, friend of weak ones, with pure hearts to
 praise!

II.

Thou art the great Word, and wisdom of God,
 The Saviour of souls; o'ercome by thy charms
 Ev'n hearts cold and hopeless, deep sunk in sin's flood,
 A taste of thy sweetness soon raises and warms.

III.

Be therefore our prince, our glory and guide;
 Thy steps are the path to virtue and bliss!
 Who drink of thy Spirit, and in thee confide,
 Their works are all comely, there's nothing amiss.

60 I G N A T I U S.

IV.

Grant us in thy word and grace so to grow,
That more solid praise to thee we may sing;
In life and in doctrine incessantly shew
Our whole heart is justly giv'n up to our King.

V.

To God's holy Child, so strong to redeem,
By us, who thro' grace his likeness do bear,
Be glory for ever, while rooted in Him,
A people of prudence and peace we appear !

A G A T H O P U S.

Now stand among the brethren, and partake
What further shall be said.

[Cat. and Pen. stand among the Brethren.]

I G N A T I U S.

If any church
Is more oblig'd than others to maintain
The purity of faith, the flame of love,
And search the perfect meaning of the gospel,
'Tis ours, where first began the name of christians,
That name is much adorn'd by due demeanour
To those without; with meekness of strong minds,
Bearing whate'er in blindness they shall do
To grieve us; nor rejecting government,
Or ought that's wise or good in this world's course;
But above all, that blessed knot be kept
Of peace and love within ourselves. 'Tis this
Detains

Detains our Lord among us ; who departs
 Soon, like the soul, from torn dissever'd limbs.
 While this continues, Satan shall not find
 Room to infuse his mischief ; nor shall I
 Be wanted ; you will all support and build
 Each other up. Be jealous then that nought,
 Plenty, nor fame, nor gifts of grace, be sweet
 To any, but in common with his brethren.
 Christ in each other see and serve ; nor let
 Suspicions or resentments rise betwixt you.
 But one word more : Sacred, you know, with us,
 Domestic order is and decency ;
 Let those who should obey and learn, submit
 Most gladly so to do, their easier lot ;
 Those who should teach and govern, as for Christ,
 Dispassionate and prudent, fill their place:
 Go thus thro' life, where poverty and toil
 In meanest occupation you must suffer,
 (And well you may with Christ within) if not
 The fiery trial. But our Lord will see,
 While you cleave to him, how to lead you on.
 In his great name I leave my Blessing with you !
 Philo, Agathopus, you'll go with me.

A G A T H O P U S.

We humbly thank you, father.

P H I L O.

But you, brethren,
 Bear on your heart your pastor's love, and strive
 If

If in life's easy common road you live,
 Yet still proportionably strong to feel
 The truths for which he goes his blood to spill.

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the Second ACT.



A C T III.

S C E N E I.

SCENE Smyrna. An outer Chamber in POLYCARP'S House.

IGNATIUS guarded by SOLDIERS.

IGNATIUS (*aside.*)

THIS is the mansion of good Polycarp,
 Disciple with me once of blessed John;
 He's indispos'd, or he had run to meet me.
 Sweet interview I hope for, if these Leopards
 Will but permit. Harsh have they been to me:
 Do thou, O Lord, return it on their heads
 In soft converting grace. I'll speak to them.
 Did you observe, my friends, what past at sea?

First

First SOLDIER.

We are not senseless: yes; there was a storm
Which lustily employ'd the skilful hands
Of our brave failors.

IGNATIUS.

But are you aware
Of that good providence and pow'r divine
Which sav'd you in the roughest hour of danger,
That now at ease you might admire his love?

SOLDIER.

This is your way, ye moralizing sect!
On ev'ry fight, or accident in life,
You introduce your God, your mystery;
As if all life were some religious thing.
Then you rip up our faults; yet can't retain
The air of masters long; for when we shew
Our just resentment, you, like silly slaves,
Tamely digest both mockery and blows.

IGNATIUS.

May you in time know from what fund of soul
All this proceeds, what energy within
Makes us——

SOLDIER.

Old man, we are not thy disciples,
But keepers; save thy voice for them that seek it.

IGNATIUS.

I G N A T I U S.

Then my request will suit your inclinations.
 Shall I have leave, while we abide at Smyrna,
 T' associate with a brother in this place?

S O L D I E R.

Yes, in our eye. But we shall cut you short
 Amidst your chat, and solemn pageantry
 Of sighs, and pray'rs, and songs, and sentences,
 So tedious when you meet. For soon at Rome
 The sports come on, and we must bring the bishop
 Where a throng'd audience will as usual wait
 His looks and gesture; likely now to yield,
 Humane for once, some pleasure to mankind.
 Go to your friend, and place us in some corner.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

S C E N E II.

SCENE opens to an inner Chamber.

POLYCARP *sitting at one End*: IGNATIUS *goes up to him*. SOLDIERS *retire to the other End of the Room*.

I G N A T I U S.

How is my friend? Feels he the mortal part
 Oppress the fervent soul?

POLYCARP,

P O L Y C A R P.

Not much, my brother,
'Tis but a slight disorder, and my Saviour
Is doubly careful to support within
My weary heart with pledges of his love.

I G N A T I U S.

I little thought, dear Polycarp, again
To see thy face.

P O L Y C A R P.

Full many rounds indeed
Have time, and human things, and human thoughts
Gone thro', since we before sat thus together.

I G N A T I U S.

We then were younger, but not otherwise
Much diff'rent: for the whirlpool of blind passion
Was, from the first, no element of ours.

P O L Y C A R P.

Just as we launch'd into a dang'rous world
God sent us a good pilot.

I G N A T I U S.

So he did.
I often think, and shall to my last breath,
Of the last hours we spent with that great man.

P O L Y C A R P.

Is it partiality, or is it insight
Into the system of a dear friend's conduct,
That makes each little thing, he says or does,

I

Speak

Speak more to us, than others are aware of?
 But so it is. I see the holiness
 Of John, not only in his elevations
 That struck mankind, but even where he seem'd
 T' express the human and the frailer side.
 Thus in his playing, to unbend the mind
 With a tame partridge, there's a tacit slur
 On mortal care, as if he said, "Be easy,
 "Your projects and this play meet in a point."
 So when old man, for lack of memory
 And matter, as it seem'd, he oft repeated
 One lesson, "Love the brethren." 'Twas, we
 know,
 A thought extracted from a world of thinking.

I G N A T I U S.

Yes, charity was always his chief theme.

P O L Y C A R P.

And that from reasonings not at all supine,
 Whate'er they were. I'm apt to think, the man
 That could surround the sum of things, and spy
 The heart of God and secrets of his empire,
 Would speak but love: With him the bright result
 Would change the hue of intermediate scenes,
 And make one thing of all theology.
 And John, 'tis certain, had an eagle's eye:
 He saw whence all creation first began,
 How it now lies, and where it ends at last:
 He saw the mighty Logos moving thro' it
 (Guardian of beings first within himself)

Ardent

Ardent t' educe the powers and vary'd beauties
 Of the deep Godhead, image of His Father.
 And then, to raise in purity and joy,
 A temp'ral world, more lax variety,
 To be the second image; which, as child
 Of grosser feature, should be cover'd o'er
 With his kind radiance, and grow up in Him.

I G N A T I U S.

I rather should assign a nearer source,
 Within the bounds of time and of the church,
 For all his strains of love: The Word made flesh,
 Oft in his hearing gave our holy union
 The honour to stand next in saving souls
 To his own blood. Nay more, had condescended
 To be himself a Brother; make but one
 Among a knot of friends: for so he seem'd,
 Th' apostle said*, to Peter and the rest,
 An easy, free, and but more knowing friend.

P O L Y C A R P.

But John was the great favourite: he was seated
 Still next to Jesus.

I G N A T I U S.

Yes, and might not that
 The near admission to such worth and sweetness
 Give him a bent to love? As 'tis well known,
 A man fresh come from one deserving object
 Can love a species in the shadow of it.

* John, whose disciple Ignatius was.

POLYCARP.

That blessed converse seem'd indeed the softest,
 As well as strongest image of his mind.
 At Jesu's name, with recollected awe,
 We'd stand adoring : He would drop a tear,
 As for an old acquaintance ; then correct it
 With a mild smile, that let down his whole soul
 To simplest posture and a strange repose.
 Wonder not, sons, said he, that still my heart
 Emotions feels for Jesus as a man.
 I know Him such, most amiable and kind !
 And ev'ry little passage of his life
 In flesh, his walks, his lodging and repast,
 Not without shifts of poverty, recur.
 How many silly questions have we ask'd him,
 While he gave answers, that with all their depth
 Would also please ? Cheerful he was to us ;
 But let me tell you, sons, he was within
 A pensive man, and always had a load
 Upon his spirits.

I G N A T I U S.

That was for our sins.
 Mourning was His, that constant joy of faith
 Might be the character of our poor service,
 Whose guilt he bore, and drank up all our curse.

POLYCARP.

O precious door of hope ! how much did John
 Grieve, when the Gnostic heresy would shut it,
 Denying Christ had flesh wherein to suffer ?

IGNATIUS.

I G N A T I U S.

This was one reason why the holy charge
Of the blest virgin who abode with him,
Pleas'd him so much; she was a monument
Of Jesu's true humanity.

P O L Y C A R P.

As that
Is likewise the great basis of our hope
Of resurrection and a glorious change,
Like His, from mortal to immortal flesh.

I G N A T I U S.

What that immortal flesh may be, was shewn
To John in awful vision, when he saw
(And scarce could bear the overwhelming favour)
His Jesus stand before him, now expressing
His heav'nly substance and his robes of light.

P O L Y C A R P.

What large discoveries to the end of time
Were then vouchsaf'd to John! he saw the rage
Of Antichrist prevailing, and the love
Of many waxing cold. He saw the throne
Where sits our Lamb, incessantly ador'd
By angel-hoſts, and looking down mean while
On mortal man, and on his suff'ring church.
He saw the mighty judgment and the plagues
Of God's last wrath: From which the chosen bands
Into their New Jerusalem receiv'd,
Partake with Jesus a triumphant rest.

I G N A T I U S.

I G N A T I U S.

Low at the feet, not only of great John,
 But of the meanest servant of my Lord,
 May I be found that day ! Yet must I tell
 (Since Polycarp's no novice in these things)
 What gifts of late, as I draw nearer death,
 Are lent ev'n me. I can discern the scope
 Of former dispensations ; both the league
 And diff'rence of christianity and them.
 I know the ranks and polity of angels,
 And by this mouth, predictive of events
 Then future, hath the Father truly spoke.

P O L Y C A R P.

I do believe it, brother (and my soul
 By sympathy has tasted of thy gifts
 While thou didst speak) for doth not Christ indeed
 Dwell in all his, and shew forth as he pleases,
 Or graces, which the world calls wonderful,
 Or those which with mere nature it confounds ?

I G N A T I U S.

That is another doctrine sweetly taught
 By our apostle ; that we live in Christ,
 Have fellowship with him, and on him grow
 As branches on the vine ; that he's a light,
 Vital and chearing to our inward man.
 This short description does convey much more
 Than the most labour'd circle of vain words.

P O L Y C A R P.

POLYCARP.

The station which we hold in Jesus now,
Redeem'd from earth, no words of man can reach;
But you shall quickly know, my dear Ignatius,
What 'tis to be with him in better regions,
You'll see his face, and see it as a martyr.

IGNATIUS.

Take comfort, Polycarp! your time will come.
My deacons should be back. I gave them leave
An hour or two to see the saints of Smyrna.

POLYCARP.

Not to learn ought, when they have liv'd at Antioch.

IGNATIUS.

Yes, an appeal is made (as I perceiv'd
At sea) to your chief brethren's light and spirit,
About the christian life. My two young men
Are different in their natures; and the warmest
Wants to transform the other to himself.
And this indeed were well, could it be done:
For I must own, Agathopus is faithful
And fervent in the work of Christ; the more
Because he's purely what the gospel makes him,
Knowing no taste or theory besides.
But then the other likewise is sincere;
Too much indeed entangled with the charms
Of philosophic liberty of thought,
Milky benevolence, and love of ease;
Yet firm at heart to Christ; how'er complexion,
Like

Like a strong wind, may half a diff'rent way
Blow back the soul's loose vest.

P O L Y C A R P.

Is there no use
Wheretò this latter genius may be turn'd?

I G N A T I U S.

To teach the wounded self-abhorring mind
A secret hope and patience with itself,
Is Philo's talent. As his sense is quick
To equity, and caution, and decorum;
And as he truly loves the human nature,
He's farther useful to restrain excesses;
And chiefly that, where most young converts err,
A pique and enmity to unbelievers.
But here they come.

Enter PHILO and AGATHOPUS.

P H I L O.

You're happy, reverend father,
In such a worthy flock.

A G A T H O P U S.

But thou'rt condemn'd.

P O L Y C A R P.

I've heard the case: Shall I be arbitrator?
Judge not each other any more, my sons!
Each has his province: Thou, Agathopus,
Of make impetuous, and by grace divine,
Upright in faith, and full of christian fervour,

Art

My hands shall play you goulden harmonie,
How like you this ? say, will you doe it firs ?

WIL. I, and that brauely too, marke my deuice.

Place Mosbie being a stranger in a chaire,
And let your Husband sit vpon a stoole,
That I may come behind him cunninglie,
And with a towell pull him to the ground,
Then stab him till his flesh be as a siue,
That doone beare him behind the Abby,
That those that finde him murthered, may suppose,
Some slaue or other kil'd him for his golde.

ALES. A fine deuice, you shall haue twenty pound,
And when he is dead, you shall haue forty more.
And least you might be suspected staying heere,
Michaell shall saddle you two lusty geldings.
Ryde whether you will to Scotland or to Wales.
Ile see you shall not lacke, where ere you be.

WIL. Such wordes would make one kill 1000. men.
Giue me the key, which is the counting house ?

ALES. Here would I stay, and still encourage you,
But that I know how resolute you are.

SHA. Tush, you are too faint harted, we must do it.

ALES. But Mosbie will be there, whose very lookes,
Will ad vnwounded courage to my thought,
And make me the first, that shall aduenture on him.

WIL. Tush, get you gone, tis we must do the deede.
When this doore opens next looke for his death.

ALES. Ah, would he now were here, that it might open,
I shall no more be closd in Ardens armes,
That lyke the snakes of blacke Tisiphone,
Sting me with their embraceings, Mosbie's armes

Shal compasse me, and were I made a starre,
 I would haue none other spheres but those,
 There is no nectar, but in Mosbie's lypes,
 Had chast Diana kist him, she like me,
 Would grow loue sicke, and from her watrie bower,
 Fling down Endimion and snatch him vp:
 Then blame not me, that slay a silly man,
 Not halfe so louely as Endimion.

Here enters Michaell.

MIC. Mistres, my maister is comming hard by.

ALES. Who comes with him.

MIC. No body but Mosbye.

ALES. That's well Michaell, fetch in the tables,
 And when thou hast done, stand before the
 countinghouse doore.

MIC. Why so?

ALES. Black Will is lockt within, to do the deede,

MIC. What shall he die to night?

ALES. I, Michaell.

MIC. But shall not Sufan know it?

ALES. Yes for shele be as secretee as our selues.

MIC. That's braue, I'll go fetch the tables.

ALES. But, Michaell, hearke to me a word or two,
 When my busband is come in, lock the streete doore:
 He shall be murthred or ere the guests come in. Exit Mic.

Here enter Arden and Mosbie.

Husband what mean you to bring Mosby home?

Although I wisht you to be reconciled,

Twas more for feare of you, than loue of him,

Black

Black Will and Greene, are his companions,
And they are cutters, and may cut you shorte,
Therefore I thought it good to make you frends.
But wherefore do you bring him hether now,
You haue giuen me my supper with his fight.

MOS. Master Arden, me thinks your wife would haue me gone.

ARD. No, good master Mosbie, women will be prating.
Ales bid him welcome, he and I are frends.

ALES. You may inforce me to it, if you will.
But I had rather die then bid him welcome,
His company hath purchast me ill frends.
And therefore wil I nere frequent it more.

MOS. Oh how cunningly she can dissemble.

ARD. Now he is here you will not serue me so.

ALES. I pray you be not angree or displeased,
I'll bid him welcome seing you'll haue it so,
You are welcome, master Mosbie, will you sit down.

MOS. I know I am welcome to your louing husband,
But for your selfe, you speake not from your hart.

ALES. And if I do not, sir think I haue cause,

MOS. Pardon me master Arden, I'll away.

ARD. No good master Mosbie.

ALES. We shal haue guests enough, though you go hence.

MOS. I pray you, master Arden, let me go.

ARD. I pray thee, Mosbie, let her prate her fill.

ALES. The dores are open sir, you may be gone.

MIC. Nay that's a lye, for I haue lockt the dores.

ARD. Sirra fetch me a cup of Wine.

Ile make them freends.

And, gentle mistres Ales, seeing you are so stout,

You shal beginne, frowne not, Ile haue it so.

ALES.

Mic.

Black

ALES. I pray you meddle with that you haue to do.

ARD. Why, Ales? how can I do too much for him,
Whose lyfe I haue endaungered without cause.

ALES. Tis true, and seeing 'twas partly through my means,
I am content to drinke to him for this once.
Here master Mosbie, and I pray you henceforth,
Be you as straunge to me, as I to you,
Your company hath purchas'd me ill freends,
And I for you God knowes, haue vnderferued
Beene ill spoken of in euery place.

Therefore hencefoorth frequent my house no more.

MOS. I'le see your husband in dispight of you,
Yet Arden I protest to thee by heauen,
Thou nere shalt see me more, after this night.
Ile go to Roome rather than be forsworne.

ARD. Tush I'le haue no such vowes made in my house.

ALES. Yes I pray you husband let him sweare,
And on that condition Mosbie pledge me here.

MOS. I, as willingly as I meane to liue.

ARD. Come Ales, is our supper ready yet?

ALES. It wil by then you haue plaid a game at tables.

ARD. Come master Mosbie, what shall we play for?

MOS. Three games for a french crowne fir,
And please you.

ARD. Content.

❖ *Then they play at the Tables.*

WIL. Can he not take him yet? what a spight is that?

ALES. Not yet Will, take hede he see thee not?

WIL. I feare he wil spy me, as I am coming.

MIC. To preuent that, creepe betwixt my legs.

MOS.

MOS. One ace, or els I lose the game.

ARD. Mary fir theres two for fayling.

MOS. Ah' master Arden (now I can take you)

❖ *Then Will pulles him down with a towell.*

ARD. Mosbie, Michaell, Ales, what will you do?

WIL. Nothing but take you vp fir, nothing els.

MOS. Ther's for the pressing Iron you could me of.

SHA. And ther's for the ten pound in my sleeue.

ALES. What, grones thou? nay then giue me the weapon,
Take this for hindring Mosbies loue and mine.

MIC. O, Mistres!

WIL. Ah! that villaine wil betray vs all.

MOS. Tush feare him not, he will be secrete.

MIC. Why dost thou think I will betray my selfe?

SHA. In Southwarke dwels a bonnie northerne lasse,
The widow Chambley, i'le to her house now,
And if she will not giue me harborough,
Ile make bootie of the Queane euen to her smocke.

WIL. Shift for your selues we two will leaue you now.

ALES. First lay the bodie in the countinghouse.

❖ *Then they lay the body in the Countinghouse.*

WILL. We haue our gould, mistris Ales, adieu,
Mosbie farewell, and Michaell farewell too,

Exeunt.

Enter Susan.

SUSAN. Mistres, the guests are at the doores.
Hearken they knocke, what shall I let them in?

ALES. Mosbie go thou and beare them companie. Exit Mos.
And, Susan, fetch water and wash away the bloode.

SUSAN. The bloode cleaueth to the ground and will not out.

ALES.

MOS.

ALES. But with my nailes i'lle scrape away the blood,
The more I striue the more the blood appeares :

SUSAN. What's the reason mistres, can you tell?

ALES. Because, I blush not at my husbands death.

Here enters Mosbie.

MOS. How now, what's the matter? is all well?

ALES. I, wel, if Arden were aliue againe,
In vaine we strīue, for here his blood remains.

MOS. Why strew rushes on it, can you not,
This wench doth nothing, fall vnto the worke.

ALES. Twas thou that made me murder him,

MOS. What of that?

ALES. Nay nothing, Mosbie, so it be not known.

MOS. Keepe thou it close, and tis vnpossible,

ALES. Ah but I can not, was he not slaine by me,
My husbands death torments me at the hart.

MOS. It shall not long torment thee gentle Ales,
I am thy husband, thinke no more of him.

Here enter Adam fowle and Bradshaw.

BRAD. How now, mistres Arden? what ayle you weepe?

MOS. Because her husband is abroad so late,
A cupple of Ruffins threatned him yesternight,
And she poore soule is afraid he should be hurt.

ADAM. Ist nothing els? tush, hele be here anone.

Here enters Greene.

GRE. Now mistres Arden lacke you any guests,

ALES. Ah master Greene, did you see my husband lately?

GRE. I saw him walking behind the Abby euen now.

Here

Here enters Francklin.

ALES. I do not like this being out so late,
Master Francklin, where did you leaue my husband?

FRAN. Beleeue me I saw him not since Morning,
Feare you not hele come anone, meane time
You may do well to bid his guests sit down.

ALES. I, so they shall; master Bradshaw, sit you there,
I pray you be content, Ile haue my will.
Master Mosbie, sit you in my husband's seat.

MIC. Susan shall thou and I wait on them,
Or and thou saist the word let vs sit down too.

SU. Peace we haue other matters now in hand,
I feare me Michael al wil be bewraied.

MIC. Tush, so it be knowne that I shal marry thee in the
Morning, I care not though I be hang'd ere night.
But to preuent the worst, Ile buy some rats bane.

SU. Why Michael wilt thou poyson thy selfe?

MIC. No, but my mistres, for I feare shele tell.

SU. Tush Michel feare not her, she's wise enough.

MOS. Sirra Michell giue us a cup of beere,
Mistres Arden, heer's to your husband.

ALES. My husband?

FRA. What ailes you woman, to crie so suddenly?

ALES. Ah neighbors, a suddenn qualm came ouer my hart
My husband's being foorth torments my mynde.

I know something's amisse, he is not well,

Or els I should haue heard of him ere now.

MOS. She will vndo vs, through her foolishnes.

GRE. Feare not mistres Arden, he's well enough.

ALES. Tell not me, I know he is not well,

He was not wount for to stay thus late.

Good master Francklin, go and seeke him forth,

And if you finde him send him home to mee.

And tell him what a feare he hath put me in.

FRA. I lyke not this, I pray God all be well.

Exeunt Fra. Mos. and Greene.

Ile seeke him out, and find him if I can.

ALES. Michaell, how shall I doo to rid the rest away?

MIC. Leaue that to my charge, let me alone,

Tis very late master Bradshaw,

And there are many false knaues abroad,

And you haue many narrow lanes to pas.

BRAD. Faith, friend Michaell, and thou saiest trew,

Therefore I pray thee lights forth, and lends a linck.

Exeunt Brad. Adam, and Michael.

ALES. Michael bring them to the dores, but do not stay,

You know I do not loue to be alone.

Go Susan and bid thy brother come,

But wherefore should he come? Heere is nought but feare.

Stay Susan stay, and helpe to counsell me.

SUSAN. Alas I counsell, feare frights away my wits.

❖ *Then they open the countinghouse doore,
and looke vppon Arden.*

ALES. See, Susan, where thy quondam Maister lyes,
Sweete Arden smeard in bloode and filthy gore.

SUSAN. My brother, you, and I, shall rue this deede.

ALES. Come, Susan, help to lift his body forth,
And let our salt teares be his obsequies.

Here

Here enter Mosbie and Greene.

MOS. How now, Ales, whether will you beare him?

ALES. Sweete Mosbie, art thou come?

Then weepe that will.

I haue my wishe in that I joy thy sight.

GRE. Well it houes vs to be circumspect.

MOS. I, for Francklin thinks that we haue murthred him.

ALES. I but he cannot proue it for his lyfe,
Wele spend this night in daliance and in sport.

Here enters Michael.

MIC. O mistres the Maior and all the watch,
Are comming towards our house with glaues and billes.

ALES. Make the dore fast, let them not come in.

MOS. Tell me, swete Ales, how shal I escape?

ALES. Out at the back dore, ouer the pyle of woode,
And for one night ly at the flowre deluce.

MOS. That is the next way to betray my selfe.

GRE. Alas mistres Arden the watch will take me here,
And cause suspition, where els would be none.

ALES. Why take that way that master Mosbie doeth,
But first conuey the body to the fields.

❖ *Then they beare the body into the fields.*

MOS. Until to morrow, sweete Ales, now farewell,
And see you confesse nothing in any case.

GRE. Be resolute mistres Ales, betray vs not,
But cleaue to vs as we wil stick to you.

Exeunt Mosbie and Grene,

ALES. Now let the judge and juries do their worst,
My house is cleare, and now I feare them not.

M

SUSAN.

SUSAN. As we went it snowed al the way,
Which makes me feare, our footesteps will be spyed.

ALES. Peace, foole, the snow wil couer them againe.

SUSAN. But it had done before we came back againe.

ALES. Hearke! hearke! they knocke,
Go, Michaell, let them in.

Here enter the Maior and the Watch.

How now master Maior, haue you brought my husband home?

MAIOR. I sawe him come into your house an hour agoe.

ALES. You are deceiued, it was a Londoner.

MAIOR. Mistres Arden know you not one
that is called black Will?

ALES. I know none such, what meane these questions?

MAIOR. I haue the counsels warrand to apprehend him.

ALES. I am glad it is no worse.

Why, master Maior, thinke you I harbour any such?

MAI. We are inform'd that here he is,
And therefore pardon vs, for we must search.

ALES. I, search and spare you not, through euery roome,
Were my husband at home, you would not offer this.

Here enters Francklin.

Master Francklin, what meane you come so sad?

FRA. Arden thy husband, and my freend, is slaine.

ALES. Ah, by whome? master Francklin can you tell?

FRA. I know not, but behind the Abby,
There he lyes murthred in most pittious case.

MAI. But, master Francklin, are you sure tis he.

FRA. I am too sure, would God, I were deceiued.

ALES.

ALES. Find out the Murthrers, let them be knowne.

FRAN. I so they shall, come you along with vs.

ALES. Wherefore?

FRAN. Know you this handtowel and this knyfe?

SU. Ah Michael through this thy negligence,
Thou hast betraied and vndone ys all.

MIC. I was so affraide, I knew not what I did,
I thought I had throwne them both into the well.

ALES. It is the pig's bloode we had to supper.
But wherefore stay you? finde out the murthrers.

MA. I feare me you'le proue one of them your selfe.

ALES. I one of them, what meane such questions?

FRA. I feare me he was murthred in this house,
And carried to the fields, for from that place,
Backwards and forwards may you see,
The print of many feete within the snow,
And looke about this chamber where we are,
And you shall finde part of his giltles bloode,
For in his slipshoe did I finde some rushes.
Which argueth he was murthred in this roome.

MA. Looke in the place where he was wont to sit.
See, see, his blood, it is too manifest.

ALICE. It is a cup of wine that Michael shed.

MICH. I, truly.

FRAN. It is his blood, which strumpet, thou hast shed,
But if I liue, thou and thy complices
Which haue conspired, and wrought his death,
Shall rue it.

ALICE. Ah, master Francklin, God and Heauen can tell,
I loued him more than all the world beside.

But

But bring me to him, let me see his body.

FRAN. Bring that villain and Mosbie's sifter too
And one of you goe to the Flowre-de-Luce.

And seek for Mosbie, and apprehend him.

Exeunt.

Here enters Shakebag solus.

SHA. The widdow Chambly in her husband's daies I kept
And now he's dead, she is grown so stout
She will not know her old companions :
I came thither, thinking to have had
Harbour, or I was wont,
And she was ready to thrust me out at dores,
But whether she would or no, I goe me up,
And as she followed me I spur'd her downe the staires,
And broke her neck, and cut her Tapsters throate,
And now I am going to fling them in the Thames,
I haue the gold, what care I though it be knowne ?
Ile crosse the water, and take sanctuary.

Exit Shakebag.

Here enter the Maior, Mosbie, Alice, Francklin, Michael,
and Susan.

MAIOR. See, mistris Arden, where your husband lies,
Confess this foule fault and be penitent.

ALES. Arden, sweet husband, what shall I say ?
The more I sound his name, the more it bleeds ;
This blood condemnes me, and in gushing forth,
Speaks as it falls, and askes me why I did it ;
Forgiue me Arden, I repent me now,
And would my death saue thine, thou shouldst not die,
Rise up, sweet Arden, and enjoy thy loue.

And

And frowne not on me, when we meet in heaven,
In heaven I love thee, though on earth I did not.

MAIOR. Say, Mosbie, what made thee murder him?

FRAN. Studie not for an answer, looke not downe,
His purse and girdle found at thy bed's head.
Witnesse sufficiently thou didst the deed,
It bootles is to swear thou didst it not.

MOS. I hired Black Will and Shakebag, ruffins, both
And they and I have done this murderous deede,
But wherefore stay we?
Command and beare me hence.

FRA. Those ruffins shall not escape,
I will to London and get the councel's warrand
To apprehend them.

Exeunt.

Here enters Will.

WILL. Shakebag, I heare hath taken sanctuary,
But I am so pursued with hues and cries,
For petty robberies that I have done;
That I can come unto no sanctuary.
Therefore must I in some oyster boate,
At last be faine to goe aboard some hoye,
And so to Flushing, there is no staying here.
At Sittingburn the watch was like to take me,
And had not I with my buckler cover'd my head,
And ran full blanke at all adventures,
I am sure I had ne're gone further than that place,
For the constable had twenty warrands to apprehend me,
Besides that, I robbed him and his man once at Gads-Hill.
Farewell England i'le to Flushing now.

Exit.

Here

Here enter the Major, Mosbie, Alice, Michael, Susan, and Bradshaw.

MAIOR. Come, make haste and bring away the prisoners,

BRAD. Master Arden, you are now going to God,
And I am by the law condemned to die,
About a letter, I brought from master Greene;
I pray you, mistress Arden, speake the truth,
Was I ever privy to your intent or no?

ALES. What should I say?

You brought me such a letter,
But I dare sweare thou knewest not the contents,
Leaue now to trouble me with worldly things,
And let me meditate upon my Saviour Christ
Whose blood must saue me for the blood I shed.

MOS. How long shall I liue in this hell of griefe?
Convey me from the presence of that strumpet,

ALICE. Ah! but for thee I had neuer been a strumpet,
What cannot oathes and protestations doe,
When men haue opportunity to woo?
I was too young to sound thy villanies,
But now I finde it and repent too late.

SUSAN. Ah gentle brother, wherefore should I die?
I knew not of it till the deed was done.

MOS. For thee I mourne more than for myself,
Let it suffice I cannot saue thee now.

MICH. And if your brother, and my mistress,
Had not promised me you in marriage,
I had neuer giuen consent to this foule deed.

MAIOR.

MAIOR. Leauē to accuse each other now,
 And listen to the sentence I shall giue,
 Beare Mosbie and his sister to London straight,
 Where they in Smithfield must be executed.
 Beare mistris Arden unto Canterbury,
 Where as her sentence is, she must be burnt,
 Michael and Bradshaw in Feuersham
 Must suffer death.

ALICE. Let my death make amends for all my sinne.

MOS. Fie upon women this shall be my song,
 But beare me hence for I haue liued too long.

SUSAN. Seeing no hope on earth in heauen is my hope.

MICH. Faith I care not, seeing I die with Susan.

BRAD. My blood be on his head who gaue the sentence.

MAIOR. To speedy execution with them all. Exeunt.

Here enters Francklin.

FRAN. Thus haue you seen the truth of Ardens death.
 As for the ruffins Shakbag and Black Will,
 The one took sanctuary and being sent for out
 Was mured in Southwarke, as he past
 To Greenwich, where the Lord Protector lay.
 Black Will was burnt in Flushing at a stake,
 Greene was hanged at Ospringe in Kent,
 The painter fled, and how he dyed we know not.
 But this about the rest is to be noted,
 Arden lay murdered in that plot of ground,
 Which he by force and violence held from Rede.
 And in the grasse his bodies print was seene,

Two yeares and more after the dede was done.
Gentlemen, we hope youle pardon this naked Tragedie,
Wherein no filed points are foisted in,
To make it gracious to the eare or eye,
For simple truth is gracious enough,
And needs no other points of glozing stufte.

F I N I S